

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

29 May – 31 May 2012

Question: BET 1089-1090

Topic: Education Expenses (PC)

Hansard Page: Written (Received from Committee - 13 June 2012)

Senator BUSHBY asked:

1089. What are the department/agency's guidelines on study? Please provide details.

1090. For this financial year to date, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio department and agency. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, the employment classification of each participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant (provide a breakdown for each employment classification). Also include the reason for the study and how it is beneficial for the department/agency.

Answer:

1089. The Productivity Commission's studies assistance policy provides for the following:

- Permanent employees or non-ongoing employees of two years employment are eligible to apply for Studies Assistance
- Studies Assistance is approved one semester at a time
- Employees must be enrolled for a course of study at an approved educational institution
- The course of study must directly relate to the work of the Commission or relate more generally to the work of the APS
- Three levels of assistance are available, and an employee may be approved for any or all levels of assistance:
 - approval as a student (enables the employee to access their own accrued paid annual leave or leave without pay for study purposes and provides one additional day of paid special leave for examination or assessment purposes)
 - approval for study leave (enables the student to access up to 6 hours paid leave per week (exclusive of study breaks) for attendance at formal tuition, assessment or examination, subject to the submission and approval of a formal study plan)
 - approval for financial assistance (enables the student to be reimbursed for course fees, HELP contributions, prescribed text books, subject to the limits of: a maximum 80% per item, a maximum \$3000 per unit of study, and no more than a total of \$7,500 per annum, upon provision of eligible receipt(s) and proof of successful completion of the course of study).

1090. For the financial year to 31 January, the total education costs for the Productivity Commission approved under its Studies Assistance policy were \$23,253 (GST exclusive) and there were five approved students. The Productivity Commission is unable to break down the costs any further as the exercise would involve an unreasonable diversion of resources.