

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2014-15
23 October 2013

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

TOPIC: VET FEE HELP debt

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 23 October 2014, pages 71-74)

QUESTION No.: SI-36

Senator KIM CARR: I will bring you back full circle. If you are saying that there are people enrolled in programs in which they are not suited, be it disabled and I would suggest if you have large numbers of non-completions then perhaps a prima facie case of a problem, what happens to the VET FEE-HELP debt for those students?

Senator Ronaldson: That is probably more a question for Education.

Mr Robinson: I did say before that in one case that we were talking about that we had contacted the RTO and then they had cancelled the VET FEE-HELP debt of those students. We do follow up and in some cases we can get some action. We refer some of those over to Education as well. You are right that basically the program is administered by the Department of Education.

Senator KIM CARR: I understand that. It goes to your administrative actions. As a matter of course will you be contacting the Department of Education where you discover that students are enrolled in inappropriate courses?

Mr Robinson: Yes, and if we have a concern that they were enrolled in the wrong one we would ask the education department to look at the debt that they had incurred. I will have to check, as I said before, what process we have had in place—

Senator KIM CARR: To date.

Mr Robinson: To date and we will come back to you on that issue.

ANSWER

The new standards for RTOs (which come into force on 1 January 2015 for training organisations seeking initial registration and 1 April 2015 for existing RTOs) are clearer than the previous standards and include new provisions requiring RTO's to:

- provide details to learners about any schemes, such as VET FEE-HELP, associated with the RTOs provision of services to the learner
- have a formal agreement with any broker recruiting students on their behalf
- notify the regulator of any such agreements
- ensure that any brokers operating on their behalf meet the standards about the development of course assessment and fee information to students.

ASQA has engaged with the Department of Industry and the Department of Education in regards to strengthening the arrangements in place for assisting students adversely affected by unscrupulous conduct in relation to the VET FEE-HELP scheme.