

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

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: VET-FEE-HELP

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Rhiannon

QUESTION No.: SI-89

1. What due diligence does the Commonwealth undertake when it pays VET-FEE-HELP to private providers? Does it audit any of the companies involved?
2. What checks are in place to ensure that students claiming VET-FEE-HELP aren't being used by private providers to rot public funding? For example, private providers claiming extra funding by artificially inflating the number of enrolled students with a disability?
3. What checks or audits has the Commonwealth undertaken in regards to Vocation, a private provider operating in Victoria, over the past 12 months?
4. If private providers are found to have breached funding guidelines or mislead either state or federal governments are they required to accept responsibility for payments made under VET-FEE-HELP?
5. On what date did John Dawkins, former chair of the National Skills Standards Council and the Australian Qualifications Framework Council, notify the government of his conflict of interest as chair of Vocation?
6. What processes and procedures were in place, prior to Mr Dawkins' resignation from the National Skills Standards Council that standards in areas such as the regulation of RTO's and the accreditation of courses was being undertaken at arm's length from individuals commercially connected to private training providers?
7. What methods does the Commonwealth use to ascertain the proportion of a private providers income that is derived from state or federal financial support, either in the form of grants or VET-FEE-HELP?
8. For each provider awarded VET-FEE-HELP in the past four years, could you please provide, in a machine readable format, the approved courses and what Field of Education they fall into, alongside the funding provided?

ANSWER

1. VET FEE-HELP is a matter for the Education and Training portfolio.
2. VET FEE-HELP is a matter for the Education and Training portfolio.
3. Vocation Limited is not a registered training organisation.
4. VET FEE-HELP is a matter for the Education and Training portfolio.
5. John Dawkins wrote to Minister Pyne on 17 September 2013 to advise that he had been invited to join the board of Vocation and raised this as a potential conflict of interest in his role as Chair of the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC).

On 6 December 2013, Mr Dawkins wrote to Minister Macfarlane to resign from his role as the Chair of the NSSC.

The Australian Qualifications Framework Council (AQFC) concluded in April 2014. Membership of the AQFC board was a matter for the Education and Training portfolio.

6. Regulation of RTOs and accreditation of courses is undertaken by the Australian Skills Quality Authority, which has no formal connection to the NSSC.

7. The Australian Government does not collect this information.

VET FEE-HELP is a matter for the Education and Training portfolio.

8. VET FEE-HELP is a matter for the Education and Training portfolio.