

## Senate Committee: Education and Employment

### QUESTION ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015

#### Outcome Higher Education Research and International

#### Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000060

Senator Carr, Kim asked on 25 February 2015, Hansard page 32

#### *Departmental modelling of deregulated student fees*

#### Question

Senator KIM CARR: I was actually summarising it, but that is neither here nor there. The question I am putting to you, Ms Paul, goes to the issue of whether or not this committee has been misled by the department on regular occasions. In answer to 355, for instance, on the question of modelling, there are repeated references to modelling through the Hansard. It is my contention, Ms Paul, that the department has sought to convey the impression that you did not undertake modelling. It would be apparent to me from the statement that Mr Griew has made that extensive modelling has been undertaken. I am wondering how you reconcile the evidence presented to the AAT with the statements made by officers and answers to questions concerning modelling.

Ms Paul: I am happy to give you my own undertaking that I will have a look at this, on notice. I am not quite sure of the status of this document, but nonetheless I will take more broadly on notice, if that may be more appropriate, to review our previous evidence and to correct anything that might need correcting. I am not saying I am thinking it will; I am just saying that I am giving you a genuine undertaking.

Senator KIM CARR: I appreciate that. It may well be that you come back to me and say, 'You've misunderstood my answers.' I can expect that that is what you will say. But I am also putting to you that by any fair reading of your answers an impression was created that modelling had not been done by the department. I think—and I am putting it to you—that that is a serious discrepancy in the evidence that has now been presented to a judicial body, which has not been presented to the parliament when numerous requests have been made for that material. Putting aside the sub judice issue, because I am not going to the case itself—and I was not even aware of the status of the particular—

Ms Paul: Neither was I.

#### Answer

In developing the higher education reform package, the department worked with the Department of Finance and the Australian Government Actuary (AGA) to estimate the impact on the Budget in various ways.

Once the policy settings of the package as a whole were finalised, the department was able to calculate the impact on the HELP scheme with the assistance of AGA. This is consistent with Mr Griew's evidence before the Senate Committee on Education and Employment on 5 June 2014 that "we did the calculations and modelling for cabinet, as we normally do, with the assistance of the Department of Finance and the Australian Government Actuary. This has fed into the parameters in the Budget. But we are not at all keen to be forecasting fees because we simply would not know what is actually going to happen with fees."

Mr Griew's statement to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal is also consistent with the department's evidence before the Committee. The statement refers to both the work on the policy development process and calculation for the purposes of HELP. In both cases the department regards the potential release of the documents as harmful to the effective operation of a deregulated market.