

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. SQ15-000134

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing

HELP debts

Question

"The Age reports that, in a letter sent to Senator Leyonhjelm of 17 March 2015, the Minister said that the Government would consider reducing Commonwealth grants to providers if a proportion of their graduates failed to repay the HELP debts.

- (a) Can the department provide detail of this proposal? Can the department provide details of the modelling it has carried out relevant to this proposal?
- (b) What factors would influence the non-repayment of HELP debts?
- (c) What modifications in enrolment policies and in course provision would the department expect to see if the Government implemented this proposal?
- (d) What kinds of courses would be adversely affected?
- (e) Would visual and performing arts courses be affected?
- (f) Would humanities courses be affected?
- (g) Would agriculture courses be affected?
- (h) What categories of students would be disadvantaged?
- (i) Would low-SES students be disadvantaged?"

Answer

The Government has agreed to explore options to address these issues.

There is a range of factors that could influence non-repayment of HELP debts including demographic factors, size of debt, completion rates, occupation, labour market outcomes (employment and earnings), periods out of the workforce, migration overseas and death.

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A specific proposal has not been developed.