

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. SQ15-000143

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing.

Presentation by Dr Ben Phillips to the University of Canberra's Higher Education Roundtable

Question

"Is the department aware of a presentation by Dr Ben Phillips to the University of Canberra's higher education Roundtable on 13 February this year? It was reported in the Fairfax press. The presentation addressed the question of the financial sustainability of various higher education policies.

Dr Phillips says that demographic trends – namely an ageing population – mean that, under present policy settings, higher education costs are not going to blow out over the medium term. This is because, on the next ten years, the 18-24-year-old cohort will grow by only 7%, compared to 17% for the population as a whole. In fact, higher education spending as a percentage of GDP will fall from 0.6% to 0.5%. Can you confirm these figures?

Do these figures support the Government's assertion that higher education funding is in crisis? In the context of demand-driven funding, approximately in how many years will demographic change precipitate a need to review higher education funding?"

Answer

The department has not seen the presentation by Mr Ben Phillips to the University of Canberra's higher education Roundtable on 13 February this year and is therefore unable to confirm his figures.

However, the fourth Intergenerational Report developed by the Treasury, suggests that the education expenses will actually be rising.