

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. SQ15-000158

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing.

Also refer to previous Question No. ED0700_15

Discussion of the Bologna Process

Question

"In QON ED0700_15, I asked for a discussion of the Bologna Process. This has not been provided. Can you provide a discussion on this process?

I also asked the department how countries such as India, Malaysia, Singapore and China were currently funding expansion and improvement in their higher education systems. Can you confirm that?

How will Australia's public expenditure on higher education change as a proportion of GDP – and as a proportion of Commonwealth outlays – as a result of the Government's proposed changes?"

Answer

Bologna Process

The 1999 Bologna Declaration established the goal of creating the European Higher Education Area by 2010. The ongoing reform agenda, known as the Bologna Process, pursues harmonisation of higher education across Europe to promote mobility of Europeans and improve the competitiveness of European higher education. This is supported through the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and regional cooperation in quality assurance.

Key implementation tools under the Bologna Process include compatible qualifications frameworks, including the adoption of the three-cycle education system, transparent and consistent quality assurance, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and Diploma Supplements. The Diploma Supplement is an information tool to improve regional mobility, transparency and recognition. Almost 50 countries participate in the Bologna Process, which is supported by the European Commission (EC). Currently, 38 countries participate in the EQF and 25 of these countries have commenced or completed referencing of their national qualifications frameworks to the EQF. The Bologna Process has facilitated improved mobility in Australia – the Department is currently working with the EC on a referencing project for the Australian Qualifications Framework and the EQF. Australia's higher degree by research system is largely compatible with the Bologna (3 + 2 + 3) model – with a notable difference being that a first-class honours degree is still the most widely-accepted path to research training.

India, Malaysia, Singapore and China – funding expansion and improvement in higher education

The four countries identified have released plans for improving their education systems as outlined below:

India

India's 12th Five Year Plan 2012-2017 was released in 2013.

Internationalisation of higher education is a priority for India, in particular to encourage joint research, increased mobility of faculty and students, increased credit transfer and qualifications recognition arrangements, and to develop online learning delivery models.

Further information is available at <http://www.12thplan.gov.in/>

Malaysia

Malaysia is strongly focussed on reaching developed economy status by 2020. The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) was released in April 2015, and provides a detailed assessment of the higher education sector, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and identifying 10 key shifts to lift performance and maximise return on investment.

Further information is available at <http://www.moe.gov.my/userfiles/file/PPP/Preliminary-Blueprint-Eng.pdf>

Singapore

The Singapore Government places strong emphasis on human capital development. In 2012, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced the creation of two new universities in Singapore: SIM University and Singapore Institute of Technology. This will increase the number of university places by 3000 a year, to 16,000 by 2020.

Further information is available at <http://www.moe.gov.sg/>

China

In July 2010 the Chinese Government released its National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development for 2010–2020. The plan identifies broad reforms to improve teacher quality, increase the research capacity of selected universities and provide professional development opportunities for senior higher and vocational education leaders.

Further information is available at: http://internationaleducation.gov.au/International-network/china/PolicyUpdates-China/Documents/China_Education_Reform_pdf.pdf

Australia's public expenditure on higher education change as a proportion of GDP

The department estimates that public expenditure on higher education, as a proportion of GDP and Commonwealth outlays, will gradually increase over the forward estimates.