

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

Outcome 3 - Higher Education, Research & International

Department of Education Question No. ED0019_15

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question

Higher Education Budget announcements - correspondence from universities

How many Vice-Chancellors or other senior university figures have written to the Minister's office expressing concerns about one or more aspects of the Government's Budget higher education announcements? What concerns have they raised? How many have indicated that they think the package as a whole is (a) unworkable; or (b) unfair and inequitable? Aside from Universities Australia, which university groupings have expressed similar concerns to the Minister? Which Vice-Chancellors (or their representatives) and which university groupings were consulted in the development of the package? Which higher education stakeholders, such as NUS, CAPA and the NTEU, have raised their concerns with the Minister?

Answer

The department, the Minister and his Office have had regular contact with universities, university groupings and other higher education institutions with regard to the higher education reforms announced in the 2014–15 Budget.

The universities, university groupings and other higher education institutions are broadly supportive of the higher education measures in the 2014–15 Budget.

The content of correspondence and topics of meetings are a matter between the Minister and individual Vice-Chancellors.

Two Working Groups were established to provide advice to the Government on policy and implementation issues. Membership of these groups included Vice-Chancellors from all university groupings, unaligned universities and representatives from non-university higher education institutions.

The development of the higher education reforms was informed by policy debates that have taken place in the higher education sector in recent years.

In the lead up to the 2014–15 Budget two significant consultation processes were under taken — the Review of the Demand Driven Funding System ('the Review') and the National Commission of Audit (NCOA). Universities, peak bodies and non-university higher education institutions made submissions to both with more than 80 submissions received by the Review, and around 20 submissions relating to higher education and research received by the NCOA.

The Minister, his office and the department sought views on 2014–15 Budget priorities from universities and peak bodies through meetings and pre-budget submissions.