

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000405

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing.

Also refer to previous Question No. SQ15-000144, SQ15-000145, SQ15-000147

Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme

Question

In answers to QONs SQ15-000144, 145 and 147 the department provides responses on the proposed Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme.

These answers go to the timing of release of the scheme's guidelines and the development and release of institutional schemes and their detail.

The department makes the point that the release of the scheme guidelines is "contingent on the passage of the...Bill." In the meantime, the department says, providers can look for guidance in developing their respective schemes to "the provisions set out in the Bill and the accompanying explanatory memorandum".

(a) Do the Bill and explanatory memorandum provide sufficient detail for a provider actually to develop a detailed scheme which would fit the Government's requirements? Can the department explain how this is the case?

(b) Isn't there a strong possibility that, in following nothing but the Bill and EM as guides, providers could develop draft schemes that, in the end, don't fit the Government's guidelines as they are eventually developed and released?

(c) Will providers be required to register or have their guidelines approved by the Department, Minister or another authority?

(d) What are the realistic prospects of developing institutional scholarship schemes for implementation at the start of the 2016 academic year?

(e) What contingency plans does the department have, should it prove unrealistic to have the schemes in place by that time??

Answer

a)-b) The provisions set out in the *Higher Education and Research Reform Bill 2014* and accompanying explanatory memorandum allows providers to understand the minimum requirements of the scheme. In particular, they describe which institutions would be required to implement the Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme, the purposes for which funds may be used and how additional revenue would be calculated. It is intended that the guidelines for the scheme be broad in nature to allow providers flexibility to determine administrative arrangements that suit their strategic goals and their student communities.

c) No.

d) Until such time as legislation to implement the scheme has been passed by the Australian Parliament, there will be no requirement for any institution to implement a Commonwealth Scholarship scheme.

e) See answer to d) above.