

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. SQ15-000410

Senator Kim Carr provided in writing.

Estimates of likely fee levels in a deregulated market

Question

Can you confirm that the department believes that, were it to disclose its estimates of likely fee-levels in a deregulated market, it could influence the market and actual fee-levels? This gives rise to a broader question: transparency in Government policy-making and administration. In a situation where a Government prediction might well influence the market, how can the public understand the basis for Government policies and estimates? Generally speaking, what are the fundamental problems associated with government as an arm's length player in a "free market"? How can government fully inform the polity about its decision-making in circumstances where its forecasts might of themselves influence the market?

Answer

Yes. It would be inappropriate to release this information as it may prejudice the operation of the market.

Consistent with its usual practice in major policy reform, the Government has presented a detailed rationale for its higher education reforms to the public, including through the Budget materials, the explanatory memorandum and the regulatory impact statement provided with the reform bills themselves. There has also been a significant public communication and consultation process, including three Senate committee inquiries with public submissions.