

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. SQ15-000444

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing.

HELP Scheme

Question

In reference to the answer to QON SQ-000171:

(a) The answer says that it “is continuing to examine options to improve the sustainability of the HELP scheme.” Does this imply that the department is concerned about the sustainability of the scheme?

(b) Is it, in its proposed form, sustainable in a truly deregulated system?

(c) What options are you examining to make HELP more sustainable?

Answer

(a) No.

(b) Yes.

(c) The Department has undertaken recent work to examine options for overseas debt recovery with the Government announcing, in the May 2015 Budget, that it will introduce measures to recover HELP debts from Australians living overseas.

This builds on other recent work to improve sustainability of HELP including the proposal to lower the minimum repayment income threshold under the higher education reforms to \$50,637 with a lower repayment rate of two per cent, and reforms to the VET FEE-HELP student loan scheme to address unscrupulous marketing.