

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. SQ15-000449

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing

Higher education measures

Question

The Parliamentary Budget Office has released a list of measures, carried from last year's Budget, that are as yet unlegislated. Of the 26 Expense measures listed, 14 are higher education measures.

(a) Can you confirm that?

(b) Can you confirm that the net effect in the 2015-16 Budget year will be \$1.155 billion?

(c) Is legislation required to institute cuts to the Research Training Scheme and to cease Reward Funding?

(d) Can you explain the figures here for the Efficiency Dividend? What assumptions underlie it? Is there an assumption that the dividend would be reapplied annually in perpetuity? Or is there an assumption that the Dividend would be applied over two years only, and that the figures presented here just show the long-term impact of that?

(e) With the Efficiency Dividend, do these figures indicate that the Government plans somehow to impose it retrospectively? How would it do that?

(f) Once again on the Efficiency Dividend – if legislation isn't passed on it, will it stay sitting in the Budget indefinitely? If the measure isn't passed, will the Government nevertheless continue to list it?

Answer

- a. There are 13 as yet unlegislated higher education measures within the Education and Training portfolio.
- b. According to the estimates released by the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), the net effect of the 13 unlegislated higher education measures in 2015-16 is \$221 million.
- c. Legislation is not required to remove Reward Funding or reduce Research Training Scheme (RTS) funding. However, legislation is required to allow institutions to charge RTS students a student contribution amount.
- d. and e) The Government is not in a position to comment on the assumptions made by the PBO.
- f. Consistent with current practice, the Budget will continue to reflect Government policy.