

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016**

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000474

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing.

Also refer to previous Question No. SQ15-000163

VET FEE-HELP (refer SQ15-000163)

Question

In regards to the answer to QON SQ-000163:

- (a) Can you confirm that the department does not hold a database of VET FEE-HELP providers subject to frequent complaints and allegations of poor conduct?
- (b) In investigating each complaint or allegation, does the department have regard to a provider's history of prior complaints or allegations?
- (c) Do you keep a record of complaints and allegations made against each provider?
- (d) Can you tell the Committee which providers have been the subject of multiple complaints and allegations?

Answer

(a) As noted in SQ15-000163, all complaints and allegations of poor behaviour or poor quality training are taken seriously and acted upon under the dedicated VET FEE-HELP compliance strategy established in 2014. The department maintains records of all enquiries and complaints received, but does not have a database as specified in the question. ASQA also maintain data on complaints and the outcome of their consideration.

(b) Yes. Each instance of VET FEE-HELP complaint or allegation against a provider is assessed against the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA 2003), which includes consideration of prior compliance against HESA 2003. The department also works with ASQA in relation to provider compliance activity.

(c) Yes. See (a) above.

(d) Complaints and allegations received by the department may not necessarily be supported by evidence, substantiated, or relate to non-compliances with the VET FEE-HELP programme requirements. In some cases students raise complaints with the department without first raising the matter with their provider; once the matter is raised with the provider it is sometimes resolved to the satisfaction of the student. In other cases the department may be investigating the matter and undertaking compliance activity.