Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000477

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing.

Also refer to previous Question No. SQ15-000160

VET FEE-HELP (refer SQ15-000160)

Question

In answer to QON SQ15-000160 the department provides detail about complaints received about VET FEE-HELP.
(a) Can you confirm that there has been a significant increase in these complaints in 2014 and 2015 to date? What has that increase been?
(b) What are the reasons for this?
(c) How do complaints about VET FEE-HELP compare with complaints about other parts of the HELP scheme, such as HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP?
(d) Can you provide figures for other HELP loans?

Answer

(a) In 2014 there were 372 complaints and in 2015 there were 379 complaints to 18 June 2015. The first complaint about VET FEE-HELP was received by the Department in 2011.

(b) From 12 January 2015, the Government launched the National Complaints Hotline which is a referral service for registered training organisation complaints. The department has received an increase in complaints since this opened. Some complaints referred through the hotline were also received directly to the department's standard enquiry line.

A dedicated VET FEE-HELP compliance strategy was established, for the first time, in 2014. Further the Government has been consulting with the sector since November 2014 about unscrupulous behaviour, which has had increased media attention. The general public has responded to the increased media coverage.

(c) Approximately 83 per cent of complaints and allegations received by the department via the TSEnquiries@education.gov.au inbox, including referrals from the National Complaints Hotline, are classified as relating to VET-FEE-HELP.

(d) Approximately 12 per cent of complaints and allegations received by the department via the TSEnquiries@education.gov.au inbox, including referrals from the National Complaints Hotline, are classified as relating to HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP.