

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

Outcome 3 - Higher Education, Research & International

Department of Education Question No. ED0052_14

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question

Student Services and Amenities Fees

With regard to the student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF):

- a. What role does the Department have in the administration of the fee?
- b. What information does the Department collect on the SSAF?
- c. How much money have universities collected through SSAF, on a year by year basis?
- d. Can you please provide a breakdown of SSAF by university?
- e. From how many students was SSAF collected in these years? Can you please provide this broken down by university?
- f. How many SA-HELP loans did students take out in 2012 and 2013 and what was the value of these loans? Can you please provide a breakdown of this by university?
- g. What information has the Department collected, or collated on services and amenities paid for using the SSAF?
- h. Has the Department prepared, received or commissioned any information on the benefits the fee provides to students and universities?
- i. Has the Department prepared, received or commissioned any information on the benefits of SSAF with regard to regional and rural universities?
- j. What policy alternatives to SSAF is the Department aware of?
- k. Has the Department done or commissioned any modelling on the result of removing the fee on the sector, or has any other Department asked for information to assist with such modelling?
- l. Has the Department received any information, or prepared any information about the affect of removing the income on student services and amenities?
- m. Has the Department consulted with the sector on the possibility of removing this revenue stream, or made preparations for such a conversation?
- n. Can you please provide an update on the status student services, amenities, representation and advocacy guidelines in light of the recent review undertaken of these?
- o. Please provide the 2012-13 updated budget outcome for this program
- p. Current forward estimates for 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17
- q. What the breakdown of these estimates is between administered and Departmental costs?
- r. How many FTE staff positions are allocated to administering programs associated with the SSAF?

Answer

Student Services and Amenities Fee

With regard to the student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF):

a. What role does the Department have in the administration of the fee?

The Department administers the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (the Act), and the associated *Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines* (Representation Guidelines) and Administrative Guidelines made under the Act. The Department administers the SA-HELP loan scheme which allows eligible students to defer payment of the fee with a loan, if they are unable to pay the fee upfront. The Department also undertakes general administrative management of the programme, including provision of information to stakeholders, complaint handling and compliance review. The SSAF is collected directly by Higher Education Providers (HEPs), and the funds are managed through their institutional governance and financial structures, in consultation with their student body as required under the Representation Guidelines.

b. What information does the Department collect on the SSAF?

Under section 19-5 and 19-10 of the Act Table A and Table B providers must provide the Department with audited annual financial statements which include SSAF revenue. SA-HELP is included in the Higher Education Student Data collection reported through the Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS) under the general authority of HESA Subsection 19-70 (i). [The programme provisions for SA-HELP are set out in Part 3-5, Divisions 125-128.] Through HEIMS, participating HEPs report on the number of students receiving assistance through SA-HELP, and the associated liability. In addition to reporting through HEIMS, participating HEPS provide the Department with estimates of the number of students expected to access SA-HELP in the coming year, and the associated liabilities.

c. How much money have universities collected through SSAF, on a year by year basis?

For the 2012 calendar year (year of commencement of SSAF) Table A universities and one Table B university (University of Notre Dame) reported in their Financial Statements \$85.129 million in SSAF received from students directly and \$56.750 million of SA-HELP.

Figures are not yet available for the 2013 calendar year.

d. Can you please provide a breakdown of SSAF by university?

Table 1 below is an extract of Table A universities and one Table B university (University of Notre Dame) Financial Statements as at December 2012 providing a breakdown of SA-HELP and SSAF amounts.

Table 1- SA-HELP and SSAF 2012 Financial Statements figures as at December 2012 for Table A universities.

University	SA-HELP (\$m)	SSAF (\$m)	Total (\$m)
ACU	1,967	2,735	4,702
Adelaide	1,769	1,751	3,520
ANU	1,057	1,698	2,755
Ballarat	637	494	1,131
Batchelor (Does not yet participate).	-	-	-
Charles Sturt	672	3,336	4,008
CQU	1,318	1,006	2,324
Curtin	1,864	1,696	3,560
Deakin	1,247	3,273	4,520
ECU	222	1,178	1,400
Flinders	1,463	1,440	2,903
Griffith	1,447	960	2,407
JCU	1,873	940	2,813
La Trobe	2,481	5,508	7,989
Macquarie	1,318	2,875	4,193
Melbourne	3,014	2,382	5,396
Monash	3,742	5,301	9,043
Murdoch	616	1,898	2,514
Newcastle	970	1,314	2,284
CDU	262	813	1,075
QUT	837	2,200	3,037
RMIT	2,267	5,054	7,321
Southern Cross	371	400	771
Sunshine Coast	1,045	512	1,557
Swinburne	1,199	957	2,156
UC	1,274	2,155	3,429
UNE	848	1,590	2,438
UNSW	1,721	4,606	6,327
UQ	3,844	3,230	7,074
USA	1,124	474	1,598
USQ	504	942	1,446
USYD	2,723	8,005	10,728
UTAS	542	1,159	1,701
UTS	1,957	2,265	4,222
UWA	378	3,345	3,723
UWS	5,044	2,590	7,634
VUT	1,087	3,498	4,585
Wollongong	2,046	1,549	3,595
All Institutions	56,750	85,129	141,879

e. From how many students was SSAF collected in these years? Can you please provide this broken down by university?

The department does not collect SSAF information from HEPs (including universities) for student numbers or amounts collected where the student pays the SSAF *in full* to the Higher Education Provider. The department only has student numbers and the associated liabilities for those students that apply for SA-HELP *in part or in full*. For SA-HELP loan details see question “f” below.

f. How many SA-HELP loans did students take out in 2012 and 2013 and what was the value of these loans? Can you please provide a breakdown of this by university?

Full year SA-HELP student liability data for the 2012 calendar year has now been reported in HEIMS by all HEPs (including universities) receiving SA-HELP. This shows that 307,335 students accessed a SA-HELP *loan in part or in full*, with a total SA-HELP debt amount of \$57.769 million.

NOTE there are slight differences for universities 2012 Financial Statements total amounts (Table 1) compared to HEIMS (Table 2) due to accounting methodology applied by universities causing timing differences with HEIMS.

Table 2. SA-HELP (student numbers and associated liabilities) by Higher Education Provider for 2012 calendar year - HEIMS

State	Higher Education Provider	Number of Students	SA-HELP Debt Amount
Australian Capital Territory	Total	11802	\$ 2,353,670.42
	The Australian National University	5772	\$ 1,092,256.75
	University of Canberra	6059	\$ 1,261,413.67
Multi-State	Total	8617	\$ 1,937,959.00
	Australian Catholic University	8617	\$ 1,937,959.00
New South Wales	Total	93149	\$ 17,936,809.82
	Charles Sturt University	6014	\$ 860,157.34
	Macquarie University	6691	\$ 1,318,437.51
	Southern Cross University	3594	\$ 370,465.50
	Tabor College NSW	35	\$ 5,040.00
	The University of New England	5747	\$ 846,084.90
	The University of New South Wales	7974	\$ 1,720,789.56
	The University of Newcastle	7702	\$ 968,960.78
	The University of Sydney	12478	\$ 2,803,260.40
	University of Technology, Sydney	9281	\$ 1,956,063.25
	University of Western Sydney	23518	\$ 5,037,960.58
	University of Wollongong	10432	\$ 2,049,590.00
Northern Territory	Total	2626	\$ 309,522.50
	Charles Darwin University	2626	\$ 309,522.50
Queensland	Total	68801	\$ 11,375,816.76
	Bond University	103	\$ 11,951.45
	Central Queensland		

	University	7867	\$ 1,453,187.00
	Griffith University	12462	\$ 1,439,625.50
	James Cook University	9091	\$ 1,866,948.13
	Queensland University of Technology	10568	\$ 1,221,698.68
	The University of Queensland	18197	\$ 3,908,370.00
	University of Southern Queensland	5271	\$ 504,236.00
	University of the Sunshine Coast	5416	\$ 969,800.00
South Australia	Total	25242	\$ 4,345,150.74
	Flinders University	7598	\$ 1,452,746.16
	The University of Adelaide	6972	\$ 1,769,114.55
	University of South Australia	10702	\$ 1,123,290.03
Tasmania	Total	3619	\$ 441,511.25
	University of Tasmania	3619	\$ 441,511.25
Victoria	Total	73304	\$ 15,936,897.15
	Deakin University	10789	\$ 1,396,596.00
	Holmesglen Institute of TAFE	126	\$ 22,232.00
	La Trobe University	10965	\$ 2,481,303.53
	Monash University	16034	\$ 3,723,240.68
	RMIT University	10052	\$ 2,277,167.14
	Swinburne University of Technology	5883	\$ 1,207,907.00
	The University of Melbourne	12094	\$ 3,013,398.70
	University of Ballarat	2920	\$ 730,825.10
	Victoria University	4703	\$ 1,084,227.00
Western Australia	Total	20695	\$ 3,131,896.01
	Curtin University of Technology	9767	\$ 1,864,451.25
	Edith Cowan University	3887	\$ 221,000.00
	Murdoch University	4318	\$ 614,726.50
	The University of Western Australia	2819	\$ 431,718.26
Total		307335	\$57,769,233.65

For the 2013 calendar year final student numbers are reported and verified by HEPs in April 2014. The figures provided in Table 3 below are the HEPs current estimate (revised November 2013) for the number of students likely to take out a SA-HELP loan and associated liabilities.

In October 2013 HEPs provided their 2014 calendar year SA-HELP estimates for student number and associated liabilities and these figures are also provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3- SA-HELP (student numbers and associated liabilities) by Higher Education Provider for 2013 and 2014 calendar year Estimate.

Higher Education Provider	2013 Revised student numbers (as at Nov 2013)	2013 Revised SA-HELP Estimate for 2013 (as at Nov 2013)	2014 Estimated student numbers (as at Nov 2013)	2014 Estimated SA-HELP (as at Nov 2013)
Australian Catholic University	9,786	2,583,320	10,973	2,976,050
Charles Sturt University	15,208	1,444,700	15,158	1,440,061
Macquarie University	6,386	1,629,262	7,020	1,843,400
Southern Cross University	8,370	831,550	8,375	862,325
The University of New England	7,314	1,028,162	7,405	1,067,240
The University of New South Wales	8,252	1,927,653	10,369	2,615,970
The University of Newcastle	10,691	2,642,229	10,760	2,739,502
The University of Sydney	29,306	3,850,665	30,259	4,020,528
University of Technology, Sydney	10,670	2,593,637	10,961	2,745,511
University of Western Sydney	28,612	6,507,333	29,012	6,790,234
University of Wollongong	12,600	2,667,790	12,600	2,667,790
Deakin	11,327	2,523,477	13,497	3,065,859
La Trobe	13,733	3,259,658	14,065	3,431,200
Monash University	14,637	3,477,813	15,866	4,063,286
RMIT	28,673	6,010,057	25,538	6,675,205
Swinburne University of Technology	7,330	1,525,874	9,320	1,788,780
The University of Melbourne	12,784	3,290,316	12,770	3,377,713
University of Ballarat (Federation Uni)	4,488	1,125,864	4,280	1,124,580
Victoria University	6,755	1,569,400	11,280	1,835,400
Central Queensland University	8,134	1,902,574	8,696	2,095,614
Griffith University	18,434	4,021,384	18,844	4,229,884
James Cook University	7,684	2,017,586	7,863	2,128,013
Queensland University of Technology	14,703	3,621,544	14,709	3,743,061
The University of Queensland	17,400	4,518,600	17,900	4,784,000
University of Southern Queensland	30,600	1,009,800	37,300	1,305,500
University of Sunshine Coast	4,314	1,173,373	4,754	1,331,021
Curtin University of Technology	11,089	2,500,088	14,154	3,273,620
Edith Cowan University	12,326	945,799	12,326	1,362,920
Murdoch University	5,912	1,208,981	6,853	1,421,087
The University of Notre Dame (Does not yet participate).	-	-	-	-
The University of Western Australia	4,043	887,243	4,220	1,100,400

The Flinders University of South Australia	8,600	1,669,000	9,500	1,910,000
The University of Adelaide	10,051	2,558,594	10,392	2,719,832
University of South Australia	9,611	2,623,746	9,773	2,748,171
University of Tasmania	7,117	1,607,293	8,530	1,655,511
BIITE (Does not yet participate).	-	-	-	-
Charles Darwin University	4,747	506,620	5,243	481,753
University of Canberra	8,560	1,996,995	8,588	2,057,482
The Australian National University	4,456	1,087,741	4,944	1,197,341
Bond University	146	37,719	180	47,744
Holmesglen Institute of TAFE	72	18069	108	27,187
Adelaide Central School of Art	61	11,240	69	12,400
Sydney College of Divinity Ltd	300	52,800	325	57,550
Tabor College (NSW) Ltd	49	4,704	67	6,174
TOTAL	435,331	86,470,253	464,846	94,826,899

g. What information has the Department collected, or collated on services and amenities paid for using the SSAF?

Under section 3.2.5 of the Representation Guidelines (2011) HEPs are required to report on the specific uses of the proceeds of the SSAF. At the request of stakeholders during the Review of the Representation Guidelines, this requirement was clarified in the revised Representation Guidelines (2013) with HEPs required to provide a publically available annual report on the actual SSAF expenditure for the year. This amendment takes effect in 2014, providing the amended Guidelines are not disallowed.

Where a complaint regarding an alleged breach of the SSAF legislation (including the institution's use of SSAF revenue) is lodged with the Department, the Department conducts a compliance review which includes a more in depth examination of expenditure.

In addition, many organisations who made submissions to the recent Review of the Representation Guidelines provided information on services and amenities paid for using the SSAF at their institution.

h. Has the Department prepared, received or commissioned any information on the benefits the fee provides to students and universities?

The final report of the review of the Representation Guidelines, was delivered in May 2013. The Review Panel received 37 written submissions from universities, peak bodies, and student organisations, and held face-to-face consultation sessions and teleconferences with 17 participants. The majority of these submissions emphasised the benefits the fee provides to students and universities. The Final Report is available on the Department's website.

In addition to the Review, the National Union of Students (NUS) submitted the *NUS Report into the Implementation of Student Services and Amenities Fee 2012* to the Department in February 2013. This report is available on the NUS website.

In recent months, the Department has received a number of letters to the Minister regarding the importance of the SSAF to students and universities.

i. Has the Department prepared, received or commissioned any information on the benefits of SSAF with regard to regional and rural universities?

No, the Department has not commissioned or prepared any work on the benefits of SSAF with regard to regional and rural universities, however, in recent months the department has received nine letters to the Minister regarding the importance of the SSAF to regional universities.

In September 2013 the Department received a submission from the Regional Universities Network (RUN) titled the *Smarter Regions, Smarter Australia – Policy Advice for an Incoming Government* stating the fee is vital for campuses in non-metro areas.

j. What policy alternatives to SSAF is the Department aware of?

The department is not aware of any alternatives to the SSAF.

k. Has the Department done or commissioned any modelling on the result of removing the fee on the sector, or has any other Department asked for information to assist with such modelling?

No.

l. Has the Department received any information, or prepared any information about the affect of removing the income on student services and amenities?

No.

m. Has the Department consulted with the sector on the possibility of removing this revenue stream, or made preparations for such a conversation?

No.

n. Can you please provide an update on the status of student services, amenities, representation and advocacy guidelines in light of the recent review undertaken of these?

The review of the Representation Guidelines was conducted, “to ensure they are operating clearly and transparently without unnecessary red tape”.

The Review Panel’s report was delivered to the previous government on 3 May 2013. The report made four recommendations in relation to the ongoing administration of the SSAF. A key recommendation in the report related to potential amendments to the Representation Guidelines.

As a result, the previous government revised the Representation Guidelines. An amendment to these guidelines (*Amendment No. 1 to the Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines 2013*) was made by the then Minister for Tertiary Education on 24 June 2013. The amendment was registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments on 26 June 2013.

Unless disallowed, HEPs will be required to use the new Representation Guidelines from 1 January 2014. A compilation of the revised guidelines was prepared by the Department on 16 July 2012 and is available on Comlaw.

o. Please provide the 2012-13 updated budget outcome for this programme

The 2012-13 updated budget outcome for this program is \$71.19 million.

p. Current forward estimates for 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17

Current forward estimates for SA-HELP as at Pre-Election Economic and Fiscal Outlook (PEFO)are:

- 2013-14 is \$88.6 million
- 2014-15 is \$95 million
- 2015-16 is \$100.6 million
- 2016-17 is \$105.7 million

q. What the breakdown of these estimates is between administered and Departmental costs?

The budgeted SA-HELP expenses are administered expenses only.

r. How many FTE staff positions are allocated to administering programmes associated with the SSAF?

There is no specific allocation of resources for the program management of SA-HELP.