

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1 and 2

Output Group: 1.2 Assistance for individuals including those with special needs.
2.5 Assistance for post school students including those with special needs.

DEST Question No. E003_04

Senator Crossin tabled on 4 June 2003.

Question:

- a) What strategies are in place to ensure that those that are eligible for Abstudy apply?
- b) What is the Department doing to ensure that kids that are eligible for Abstudy do apply?

Answer:

Ensuring eligible students apply for ABSTUDY

- a) ABSTUDY is delivered by Centrelink.

Centrelink has provided the following response.

Centrelink currently provides information on the ABSTUDY payment to customers via: Community Agents, Indigenous Specialist staff, outreach activities to educational institutions and Indigenous Communities. Centrelink is constantly reviewing and updating their Communication and Information products to ensure they contain current information on ABSTUDY entitlement and eligibility. Centrelink is also in the process of developing an advertisement for Indigenous radio and for inclusion in Indigenous papers.

At the local level Centrelink in Area Far North Queensland has developed a remote servicing 'case management' model to target remote school students, including those living in Cape York communities. This service delivery model promotes, in conjunction with the 'case management' approach, the development of relationships and partnerships with customers, communities and education bodies. Centrelink has worked collaboratively with Education Queensland and other education providers to resolve issues which affected customers in 2002.

ABSTUDY staff undertook outreach for up to a week in each community, holding meetings with parents and other community members assisting with the completion of claims, collecting claims and providing advice regarding ABSTUDY eligibility for six weeks at the end of 2002.

- b) As Centrelink delivers ABSTUDY on the Department's behalf, we are working closely with Centrelink to ensure that ABSTUDY customers are aware of their entitlements.