

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 2

Output Group: 2.4 – Funding for higher education

DEST Question No. E324_04

Senator Crossin asked on 3 June 2003, EWRE Hansard pages 266 and 267

Question:

In the context of confirming that Indigenous students are not classed as an equity group for Higher Education Equity Program (HEEP) purposes, Senator Crossin asked “if Indigenous students can access these programs or if they are excluded.” That is, “they may well be Indigenous in some instances because you may well have disabled Indigenous people accessing funds under both [ie HEEP and the Indigenous Support Funding program] – maybe or maybe not?”.

Answer:

Indigenous students

In offering to take this question on notice, Mr Burmester noted that “within equity groups, students are assigned to only one group if they have multiple equity characteristics”. In fact, for the purpose of determining HEEP funding allocations to institutions, students are counted against each of the following characteristics:

- low socio-economic status (urban only for funding purposes)
- Rural and isolated
- Disability
- Women in non-traditional areas of study
- Non-English speaking background.

If an Indigenous student from a rural area who has a disability is enrolled at an institution, the institution will receive funding under HEEP on the basis of the student’s rural background and disability, as well as funding under the Indigenous Support Funding (ISF) for an Indigenous student. This is consistent with the different purposes of each program.

An exception applies in the case of students attending Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education. The Institute does not receive HEEP funding as it derives all of its equity assistance from an agreed ISF allocation.

It should be noted that students do not access funds on an individual basis under either the ISF or HEEP. Both funding sources assist institutions to implement policies and programs aimed at promoting access and participation by designated disadvantaged student groups.