

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES

Outcome: 2

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

DEST Question No. E061_06

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Can you confirm the figures offered on p.15 of this submission about Indigenous support funding in higher education – a decline from \$3100 per student in 1996 to \$2400 per student in 2002? Has DEST monitored the impact of this decline? What has been the effect on progress rates for indigenous students?

Answer:

ABSTUDY II

The department is not able to confirm those figures reported in Submission 7 (National Indigenous Post Graduate Aboriginal Corporation) to the 'Review into the impact of ABSTUDY policy changes implemented in 2000'. Indigenous Support Program funding was \$24 512 million in 1996 and \$24 880 million in 2002 (adjusted to 2004 prices). Using consistent old scope student enrolment data, average expenditure per student under the Program decreased from \$3523 in 1996 to \$3301 in 2002, a decline of \$222 per student.

The formal report is examining the influence of all relevant factors on Indigenous higher education enrolments.

The data used to answer this question are from the National Higher Education Statistics collection, compiled by DEST with cooperation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In 2002 DEST moved to new definitions for total and commencing students in its collection.

This response uses the old definition (old scope) data because it maintains a consistent time series between 1996 and 2002. It should be noted that data based on the old definition will not be the same as new definition data provided in some other publications such as the annual National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training.