

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0353_11

Senator Marshall asked on 3/06/2010, Hansard page 17.

Question

**TAKE-UP RATE FOR NEW ARRIVALS IN THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND
LANGUAGE PROGRAM**

CHAIR—I have just got one quick question, really. It is about the take-up rate for new arrivals in the English as a second language program. Is this the right area for that?

Dr Bruniges—Yes. In non-government schools it is.

CHAIR—Yes, well a non-government program. What is the size of that compared to the government program or is it all non-government? What is the take-up rate for new arrivals; is it improving or decreasing? Do we know?

Ms Paul—I will get what we have for you.

Dr Bruniges—I might start by saying what this indicates is that the number of new arrivals assisted in the non-government sector but it does not really probably look at the population of new arrivals across the country. I am not sure whether we would have those statistics with us and again, I would probably need to go back to the ABS and Schools Australia to have a look at the number of arrivals and then look at the proportion that are arriving in the non-government sector as compared to the government sector. I think that is probably the way—

CHAIR—I would be interested to understand what the take-up rate is and why and whether it is an acceptable take-up rate because you would assume people who do not have English as their first language would all be taking up the opportunity, whether it be in the government or non-government sector. I would just like to understand what that is.

Dr Bruniges—I think we do know that in a number of jurisdictions the different programs that are offered for new arrivals probably is quite diverse. In places like, for example, Western Sydney where you have a greater number of Sudanese refugees coming in, the language programs that are supportive of those people when they come in would be probably higher than what it had been in the last decade. The increasing number of different groups will bring different issues for programs. It is very important that we remain fairly flexible to be able to cater for the needs of those new arrival peoples as well. I am certainly happy to take it on notice to have a look at those broader population statistics and come back to the committee.

Answer

The English as a Second Language – New Arrivals (ESL-NA) program offers support to newly arrived students enrolled in non-government schools who require intensive English tuition to participate more fully in Australian life and education.

The student intake for the non-government sector continues to be stable, with 1052

students being assisted in 2009, 1052 in 2008 and 1131 in 2007. Eligibility for take up of the program is based on the visa subclass of the student, as well as a particular student's level of English ability and the length of their time in Australia. Funding under this program is allocated to those primary and secondary students who are newly arrived and to those requiring intensive English tuition rather than the broader immigrant and refugee population. This ensures that students most in need are provided with the most appropriate support through the ESL-NA program.

Since 1 January 2009, funding for the government school sector has been rolled into the National Education Agreement. Government authorities in each state and territory are responsible for allocating this funding to individual schools.

The ABS does not collect data on the total number of Language Background Other Than English students in Australia.