

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & WORKPLACE RELATIONS

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2008-09 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 2

DEEWR Question No. EW807_09

Senator Mason provided in writing.

Question

Australian Technical Colleges

1. How many people were enrolled at the ATC for the first three years of the program, and at what cost?
2. Where were the reasons for the increase in the cost of the programme over the same period?
3. What are the enrolment targets for 2008 and 2009?
4. What is the current enrolment figure?

Answer

1. Total unique cumulative enrolments from 2006 until 2008 (inclusive) is approximately 4,300 students and the total appropriation is \$439.2 million.
2. The original appropriation for the program, through the Australian Technical Colleges (Flexibility in Achieving Australia's Skills Needs) Act 2005, was \$343.6 million over five years from 2005-2009.

Additional funding of \$112.6 million received Royal Assent on 15 March 2007, increasing the total amount of funds appropriated under the Act to \$456.2 million over 2005-2009. The additional funding better supported the full costs of establishing the Colleges, enabling more Colleges than anticipated to operate in 2007 and a number of Colleges, particularly in regional areas, to offer broader coverage of their regions.

Additional funding of \$74.7 million received Royal Assent on 28 September 2007, increasing the total amount of funds appropriated under the Act to \$530.9 million to 2011. The additional funding was for 3 new Colleges announced in the 2007 Federal Budget.

Savings of \$91.7 million, through not establishing 4 colleges in regions where contracts had not been signed by the previous government, was announced in the 2008-09 Budget. The total planned expenditure for the program is now \$439.2 million. No amendment has been made to the legislation to reflect these savings.

3. The ATC program had a total enrolment target for 2008 of 4,248.
4. The enrolment figures recorded on the 31 March 2008 census, show 3,174 students enrolled Australia wide.