

Division 24: Education — International Education, \$451 000 —

Mrs L.A. Munday, Chair.

Dr A.D. Buti, Minister for Finance representing the Minister for International Education.

Ms R. Brown, Director General, Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation.

Ms J. Kirk, Acting Executive Director, Strategic Policy, Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation.

Mr R. Sansalone, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation.

Ms K. Ho, Director General, Department of Training and Workforce Development.

Ms G. Husk, Acting Executive Director, Service Delivery, Department of Training and Workforce Development.

Mr A. Blagaich, Executive Director, School Curriculum and Standards, Department of Education.

Ms R. Lee, Executive Director, Strategy and Policy, Department of Education.

Mr G. Hamley, Chief of Staff, Minister for International Education.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. The chair will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with these details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by close of business Friday, 3 June 2022. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system.

I give the call to the member for Roe.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Welcome, everyone. I refer to page 364 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, and the table at the top of the page. Under the heading “Other” is the line item “International Education Program”. I want to ask some questions about that program. There is \$451 000 in this year’s budget. How many students will this funding attract, or what is the projected number of students that this funding will attract?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Sorry; can the member just repeat that, please?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 364 and the table at the top of the page. “International Education Program” is the fifth line item under the heading “Other”, about three-quarters of the way down that table.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Did the member want some information on what that involves?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes. I am just asking for the projection of how many students that particular funding will attract.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will ask Mr Blagaich to answer that.

Mr A. Blagaich: Thank you very much for the question. Over the course of the past few years, we have been looking at the number of schools that we are trying to get involved. Currently, there are three sections to the international education budget. There is the way that we calculate it. There is international education 1, which are the schools that we have as legacy schools. There are 11 schools in that group. There are 17 schools coming in IE 2. In IE 3, we are adding a sum total of schools that will take us up to 51 schools. So we will look at a total of 51 over the coming years. Projected numbers for those have run slow because of COVID, hence we have some additional funding there to support us as we come forward to getting up to that number of 51 schools.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: What is the projected retention rate of those students who flow on to complete degrees and the like? Does the department have a figure that it works on?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will ask Mr Blagaich, but I doubt that we would have that information. We do not have that information.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: What percentage of placements end up in Perth universities?

Dr A.D. BUTI: That end up going to Perth universities?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will ask whether Mr Blagaich can answer that. Probably not—but he might.

Mr A. Blagaich: Of the students who complete the Western Australian Certificate of Education offshore, we have been retaining approximately two per cent into Western Australian universities, and that is the number that we are working on increasing.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I think I will wrap up on that question for the moment.

I want to go back to page 110 of budget paper No 3. Under “COVID-19 Response”, there is the “Safe Transition Industry Support Package — International Education”. There was a \$16 million expense over 2021–22. How much has been expended under each of the following programs? The first one is the student quarantine support program.

Dr A.D. BUTI: As of February this year, the government announced the three grant programs for students, including \$8 million for the international student self-quarantine support program, \$2 million for the university service for student support program and \$6 million for the industry support program. As of 2 May of this year, 2 299 applications have been submitted for the \$2 000 payment as part of the international student self-quarantine fund. As of 2 May 2022, 34 small or medium-sized providers have applied for support through the industry support program. The evaluation of these applications is continuing, with payments totalling up to \$6 million expected to be made by 30 June this year. Payments to universities through the university services for student support program are linked to the outcome of the international student self-quarantine support program. Payments to universities are expected to be made by 30 June of this year.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Does the minister have any projections of how many students have been retained due to the support of this program compared with what was likely to happen prior to the —

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is difficult because we would need to do an experiment with a control group and a non-control group. We do not usually do those sorts of things for humans because there are ethical considerations.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Has the implementation of this program through the university sector has been strongly supported by all universities and all sections of the international education sector?

Dr A.D. BUTI: My understanding is that it has been very strongly supported, yes.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Okay. I will wrap up on that one.

The appropriation was recommended.