Austudy – Payment Trends and Profile Report  
June 2016

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## About Austudy

Austudy is the primary income support payment made to full-time students and apprentices who are aged 25 years and older.

## Austudy Quick Facts

The number of Austudy recipients grew by 1.5% from June 2014 to June 2016. The number of recipients undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET) grew by 12.5%, however the number of apprentices has decreased by 24% since 2014. This is likely to be due to the increase in apprentice wages phased in from January 2014.

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| **Table 1: Austudy Quick Facts** | | | | | |
| **Quick Facts** | **Jun-14** | **Jun-15** | **Jun-16** | **Change Jun-15 to Jun-16** | **Change Jun-14 to Jun-16** |
|
| Total Population | 48,197 | 47,569 | 48,910 | 2.8% | 1.5% |
|
| Higher Ed | 32,999 | 31,635 | 32,392 | 2.4% | -1.8% |
| School | 341 | 338 | 331 | -2.1% | -2.9% |
| VET | 13,471 | 14,479 | 15,151 | 4.6% | 12.5% |
| Apprentice | 558 | 505 | 424 | -16.0% | -24.0% |
| Not Specified | 828 | 612 | 612 | 0.0% | -26.1% |
| Had Earnings | 14,133 | 14,463 | 15,202 | 5.1% | 7.6% |

## Austudy Population – Time Series

The total Austudy population has been trending upwards over the last 10 years (increased by 76.4% from June 2006 to June 2016). This is in line with the increase in the number of people attaining bachelor degrees or higher, as reported by the ABS.

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| **Table 2: Austudy Time Series** | |
| **Month and Year** | **Recipients** |
| Jun-06 | 27,728 |
| Jun-07 | 27,869 |
| Jun-08 | 28,776 |
| Jun-09 | 34,175 |
| Jun-10 | 37,342 |
| Jun-11 | 39,213 |
| Jun-12 | 41,042 |
| Jun-13 | 46,039 |
| Jun-14 | 48,197 |
| Jun-15 | 47,569 |
| Jun-16 | 48,910 |

## Austudy Expenditure

Expenditure on Austudy has increased over time, mainly attributed to increases in recipient numbers and payment rates. The 2015-16 expenditure on Austudy is $645.44 million. Expenditure on Austudy makes up approximately 0.04% of Gross Domestic Product (ABS National Accounts).

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| **Table 3: Austudy Expenditure** | | |
| **Financial Year** | **Expenditure ($’000)** | **% of Gross Domestic Product** |
| 2010-11 | 418,819 | 0.03% |
| 2011-12 | 495,121 | 0.03% |
| 2012-13 | 558,324 | 0.04% |
| 2013-14 | 637,191 | 0.04% |
| 2014-15 | 650,284 | 0.04% |
| 2015-16 | 645,440 | 0.04% |

## Austudy by Age Group

At June 2016, the majority of Austudy recipients were aged between 25 and 34, making up 63.3% of the total population, which is broadly consistent with previous years. Only 8.5% of recipients were aged 50 and over.

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| **Table 4: Austudy by Age Group** | | | | | |
| **Age Group** | **Jun-12** | **Jun-13** | **Jun-14** | **Jun-15** | **Jun-16** |
| 25-34 | 26,503 | 29,573 | 30,925 | 30,442 | 30,979 |
| 35-49 | 11,424 | 12,882 | 13,316 | 13,182 | 13,763 |
| 50+ | 3,115 | 3,584 | 3,956 | 3,945 | 4,168 |

## Austudy by Gender

At June 2016, there were slightly more females than males on Austudy, with 47.1% male and 52.9% female. This is consistent with previous years, although the male percentage of the population has fallen since June 2012 (48.6%).

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| **Table 5: Austudy by Gender** | | | | | |
| **Gender** | **Jun-12** | **Jun-13** | **Jun-14** | **Jun-15** | **Jun-16** |
| Male | 19,942 | 22,056 | 23,187 | 22,844 | 23,051 |
| Female | 21,100 | 23,983 | 25,010 | 24,725 | 25,859 |

## Austudy by Relationship Status

At June 2016, 78% of Austudy recipients were single, the proportion has remained stable over the reported period.

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| **Table 6: Austudy by Relationship Status** | | | | | |
| **Relationship Status** | **Jun-12** | **Jun-13** | **Jun-14** | **Jun-15** | **Jun-16** |
| Not Partnered | 31,568 | 35,593 | 37,337 | 36,964 | 38,165 |
| Partnered | 9,474 | 10,446 | 10,860 | 10,605 | 10,745 |

## Austudy by Indigenous Indicator

At June 2016 the Indigenous proportion of Austudy recipients was 0.65%. The small proportion is due to the majority of Indigenous students being on ABSTUDY, rather than Austudy. Indigenous recipients include only those who have voluntarily identified as Indigenous. ABSTUDY is available to Indigenous students however some may elect to receive other payments rather than ABSTUDY.

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| **Table 7: Austudy by Indigenous Indicator** | | | | | |
| **Indigenous Indicator** | **Jun-12** | **Jun-13** | **Jun-14** | **Jun-15** | **Jun-16** |
| Non Indigenous | 40,900 | 45,874 | 47,961 | 47,312 | 48,594 |
| Indigenous | 142 | 165 | 236 | 257 | 316 |
| Percentage | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.6% |

## Austudy by Rate of Payment

The proportion of Austudy recipients on full-rate at June 2016 (81.9%) is higher than in June 2012 (77.5%). However, June 2016 is comparable with June 2015 (82.6%).

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| **Table 8: Austudy by Rate of Payment** | | | | | |
| **Rate of Payment** | **Jun-12** | **Jun-13** | **Jun-14** | **Jun-15** | **Jun-16** |
| Full Rate | 31,806 | 38,278 | 40,172 | 39,276 | 40,080 |
| Part Rate | 7,475 | 6,389 | 6,611 | 6,653 | 7,069 |
| Zero Rate | 1,389 | 1,101 | 1,138 | 1,220 | 1,379 |
| Other | 372 | 271 | 276 | 420 | 382 |

## Austudy by Earnings

The proportion of Austudy recipients reporting earnings has fallen slightly over time. As at June 2016, 31.1% of Austudy recipients had earnings, up from 28.1% at June 2012.

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| **Table 9: Austudy by Earnings** | | | | | |
| **Reporting Earnings** | **Jun-12** | **Jun-13** | **Jun-14** | **Jun-15** | **Jun-16** |
| Nil Earnings | 29,525 | 32,421 | 34,064 | 33,106 | 33,708 |
| Had Earnings | 11,517 | 13,618 | 14,133 | 14,463 | 15,202 |

## Austudy by Duration on Income Support

As at June 2016, 65.5% of recipients have been on an income support payment for longer than one year. The higher proportion is expected as educational courses are generally longer than one year.

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| **Table 10: Austudy by Duration on Income Support** | | | | | |
| **Duration** | **Jun-12** | **Jun-13** | **Jun-14** | **Jun-15** | **Jun-16** |
| Less than 1 year | 16,419 | 18,134 | 17,813 | 16,534 | 16,876 |
| 1 year plus | 24,623 | 27,905 | 30,384 | 31,035 | 32,034 |

## Austudy by Remoteness Area

Most Austudy recipients reside in major cities (78.4%). A further 20.9% live in regional areas (inner and outer), while the remaining recipients are in remote or very remote locations. These percentages follow the same pattern as the general working age population, although for the working age population there is a lower proportion living in major cities (71%) and a higher proportion living in regional areas (27%) (ABS Census 2011). Data indicate students move to major cities and inner regional areas to study.

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| **Table 11: Austudy by Remoteness Area** | | |
| **Remoteness Area** | **Jun-16** | **Percentage** |
| Inner Regional Australia | 7,728 | 15.8% |
| Major Cities of Australia | 38,343 | 78.4% |
| Outer Regional Australia | 2,474 | 5.1% |
| Remote Australia | 134 | 0.3% |
| Very Remote Australia | 27 | 0.1% |
| Not Assigned to a Remoteness Area | 204 | 0.4% |

## Austudy by State

Victoria has the highest number of Austudy recipients which is consistent with the proportions of people fully engaged with study and / or employment (ABS Census 2011), however contrary to working age and general Australian populations, which have the highest percentages in NSW, followed by Vic, then Qld (ABS Census 2011). The Austudy anomaly, and a similar YA(s) anomaly, may be a result of Indigenous students claiming ABSTUDY rather than Austudy. Total student payment (Austudy, ABSTUDY and YA(s)) numbers are more in line with general state population trends.

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| **Table 12: Austudy by State** | |
| **State** | **Jun-15** |
| New South Wales | 13,379 |
| Victoria | 13,919 |
| Queensland | 10,967 |
| South Australia | 4,353 |
| Western Australia | 4,172 |
| Tasmania | 1,238 |
| Northern Territory | 162 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 691 |
| Unknown | 29 |

## Austudy by Sector

Higher Education remains the main level of study for Austudy recipients, with 66.2% of recipients, however a larger percentage of Austudy recipients are undertaking VET courses (31%) compared with the percentage of YA(s) recipients (13.6%). There are more than twice as many YA(s) recipients in VET courses as there are Austudy recipients, but the vast majority of YA(s) recipients are in higher education (78.3%).

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| **Table 13: Austudy by Sector of Study** | | |
| **Sector** | **Jun-16** | **Percentage** |
| Higher Education | 32,392 | 66.2% |
| School | 331 | 0.7% |
| Vocational Education and Training | 15,151 | 31.0% |
| Apprentice | 424 | 0.9% |
| Not Specified | 612 | 1.3% |

## Circumstances before receiving Austudy

The majority of recipients moving onto Austudy did not transfer from another income support payment (60.5%). The largest numbers transferring from another payment came from Newstart Allowance (30.1%) and Youth Allowance (student) (4.4%).

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| **Table 14: Circumstances before receiving Austudy** | | |
| **Circumstance** | **Recipients** | **Percentage** |
| Not Receiving Income Support | 17,160 | 60.5% |
| Working Age Payment | 9,685 | 34.1% |
| Student Payment | 1,249 | 4.4% |
| Other Payment | 289 | 1.0% |

## Circumstances after receiving Austudy

Comparing June 2015 and June 2016, the majority of recipients leaving Austudy did not transfer to another income support payment. Those who did transfer to another payment transferred predominantly to Newstart Allowance (25.1%).

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| **Table 15: Circumstances after receiving Austudy** | | |
| **Circumstance** | **Recipients** | **Percentage** |
| Not Receiving Income Support | 19,203 | 71.0% |
| Working Age Payment | 7,462 | 27.6% |
| Student Payment | 3 | 0.0% |
| Other Payment | 374 | 1.4% |

## Data Descriptions

**Austudy:** Austudy is the primary income support payment made to full-time students and apprentices who are aged 25 years and older.

**Recipient Numbers:** Recipients of Austudy who are determined to be current (i.e. entitled to be paid) on the Centrelink payment system.

**Report Details:** Payment trends and profiles report - June 2016 - Produced by the Department of Social Services.

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**Source:** Department of Human Services Administrative data (DSS Extracts)

**Data Date:** Data as at the 24th of June 2016.

**Australian National Accounts:** National Income, Expenditure and Product: Table 34 Time Series Spreadsheets (cat. no. 5206.0).

**Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2011:** Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Table Builder, RA by AGE5P - Age in Five Year Groups.

## Glossary

**Age Group:** The age group of the recipient.

**Circumstances after Austudy:** This data compares two points in time, one year apart. 'Not Receiving Income Support' describes those who were in receipt of Austudy at the first point in time, who were not receiving an income support payment at the second point in time. This data does not take into account Family Tax Benefit.

**Circumstances before Austudy:** This data compares two points in time, one year apart. 'Not Receiving Income Support' describes those who were not in receipt of an income support payment at the first point in time, who were receiving Austudy at the second point in time. This data does not take into account Family Tax Benefit.

**Duration:** Duration refers to duration on Income Support and may not reflect duration on current payment type.

**Earnings:** Earnings refers to employment earnings reported in the last fortnight of the reported period.

**Expenditure:** Expenditure amount, as reported in the Department's Annual Report. '% of GDP' is the expenditure on the payment as a percentage of Australia's Gross Domestic Product (ABS data - see data source above).

**Indigenous:** Indigenous recipients include only those who have voluntarily identified as Indigenous. This data may therefore represent an undercount.

**Remoteness Area:** Remoteness Areas are based on the recipient's geo-coded address against the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) 2011.

**Rate:** The rate of the recipients payment ('other' include those recipients who, as at the data date, were yet to be paid).

**Relationship Status:** Partnered includes recipients who are married, de-facto or registered.

**Sector:** The type of educational institution the student is enrolled in. Unspecified occurs where there is no current educational institution recorded, these figures are generally higher between semesters of study.

**State:** The State or Territory recorded in the recipient's address.

## Further Information

The Department of Social Services publishes statistics about the various pensions, benefits and family payments which the Department administers, on a quarterly basis on the Australian Government’s centralised data publishing site, [data.gov.au](http://www.data.gov.au/organization/about/department-of-social-services) (http://www.data.gov.au/organization/about/department-of-social-services). A statistical overview is published on an annual basis on the Department’s website, [DSS - Statistical Paper Series](http://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/publications-articles/research-publications/statistical-paper-series) (http://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/publications-articles/research-publications/statistical-paper-series).

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