

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-2017 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: Cross Outcome - Across Programs

Question No: SQ17-000248

Topic: Grants

Hansard page: Written

Senator Louise Pratt asked:

Please provide a list of all Grant programs, activities and sub activities funded through Department of Social Services that are subject to redesign, and include: the reasons for the redesign; how long the redesign is expected to take; what consultation will occur; the expected impact on organisations currently funded under those grants; what changes are likely to be made from the redesign; and when grants under the redesigned activity are expected to commence.

Answer:

Please refer to **Attachment A**.

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-2017 Additional Estimates Hearings

Attachment A

DSS Grants Programs Subject to Redesign

Program (Sub Program or Activity)	Reason for redesign	How long is redesign expected to take?	What consultation will occur?	What will be the expected impact of redesign?	What changes are likely to be made?	When are new grants expected to commence?
Strengthening Communities (Community Development and Participation, Multicultural Affairs, Volunteering- redesigned as Strong and Resilient Communities (SARC) program)	To better align and target investment against Government priorities such as building social cohesion and addressing emerging community need.	Redesign was undertaken as part of the 2016-17 Budget and MYEFO processes and within the existing Strengthening Communities appropriation.	From January through to March 2017 the Department consulted with organisations currently funded to deliver Strengthening Communities projects about SARC in writing, face-to-face and by telephone. All input provided to the Department, where possible, has been used to inform the upcoming grants process.	The redesign will establish two activities: the Strong and Resilient Communities grants program (SARC), and the continuation of Volunteer Grants.	SARC will place a greater emphasis on collaboration amongst organisations to develop whole-of-community approaches to emerging community challenges relating to social cohesion and community resilience. The majority of organisations currently funded to deliver Strengthening Communities projects will remain eligible for funding, subject to grants processes.	1 January 2018.
Disability and Carer Service Improvement and Sector Support	To ensure the policy and program is fit-for-purpose and to ensure improved performance of funded organisations.	Redesign is expected to be complete by 30 June 2017.	Independent consultants have been engaged to conduct this review. They have consulted with all key sector stakeholders.	Redesign aims to ensure funding is well targeted and leads to improved performance and accountability of funded organisations.	Program proposal still to be submitted to Government.	1 January 2018.
NDIS Appeals program	The program has been in trial phase since 2013 because it was a new approach and activity. Redesign will include development of an approach to expanding the program and learning from the trial.	Redesign is expected to occur in the 2017 calendar year.	Consultation with key stakeholders has been ongoing. An independent review was conducted in 2015 and included consultation of people with disability that used the program supports. An external advisory group has been established to test options for future design.	Responsive and accessible advocacy and legal supports for people with disability requiring information and assistance to take decisions of the NDIA to the AAT.	Services to be available nationally.	1 January 2018.

Program (Sub Program or Activity)	Reason for redesign	How long is redesign expected to take?	What consultation will occur?	What will be the expected impact of redesign?	What changes are likely to be made?	When are new grants expected to commence?
Financial Wellbeing and Capability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Counselling and Capability Emergency and Food Relief Microfinance (Financial Resilience) 	To ensure that grant activities conform with relevant legislation and continue to achieve Government policy objectives.	Redesign is expected to be completed by 30 June 2018.	<p>The Department has consulted through its engage.dss.gov.au website and released a discussion paper 'Future Directions of the Financial Wellbeing and Capability Activity'.</p> <p>Public submissions were accepted between 22 February 2017 and 31 March 2017.</p> <p>A summary report will be released in mid-2017.</p>	Better targeting of eligibility and alignment to Government priorities.	Program Guidelines will require updating, with changes informed by consultation. Submissions received through the consultation phase will be considered in further policy development and implementation.	1 July 2018.
Reconnect (Youth Homelessness)	To explore ways to strengthen the program to better assist young people at risk of homelessness.	Redesign is expected to be completed by 30 June 2018.	<p>Consultations with service providers on the co-design approach were conducted in mid-March 2017.</p> <p>Program co-design workshops will be held with service users, stakeholders and providers.</p>	To strengthen the early intervention and prevention aspects of this ongoing program, to better assist young people at risk of homelessness.	Due to the profound impacts that homelessness can have on a young person's lifetime wellbeing, the co-design process will explore ways to strengthen early intervention and prevention.	1 July 2018.
Families and Communities Service Improvement (FCSI)	To ensure that grant activities conform with relevant legislation and continue to achieve Government policy objectives.	Redesign is expected to be completed by 30 June 2018.	Redesign will be conducted in consultation with the sector.	Redesign will strive to minimise impacts to service delivery, where appropriate.	Redesign will seek to ensure the activity closely aligns with the Government's policy agenda and enhances the strategic nature of the Government's partnerships with peak bodies.	1 July 2018.
National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP)	To ensure the program is able to provide advocacy to people with disability effectively and efficiently in the NDIS environment.	<p>Consultation began in April 2016 and has continued since then in various forms.</p> <p>Redesign is expected occur in the 2017 calendar year.</p>	Multiple and ongoing engagements with stakeholders – online, group meetings, individual discussions and focus groups.	Improved access to advocacy by people with disability regardless of location and issue.	Program proposal still to be submitted to Government.	1 July 2018.
Print Disability Services Program (PDSP)	To ensure policy and program is fit-for-purpose in the context of swiftly changing technologies and the NDIS.	Redesign is expected to occur in the 2017 calendar year.	<p>Independent consultants have been engaged to conduct a review of print disability policy and programs and make recommendations.</p> <p>They will be consulted with all key stakeholders including users of these programs.</p>	<p>No duplication with NDIS supports.</p> <p>Renewed focus on people with print disability who are most disadvantaged in their access to relevant supports.</p> <p>Increased value for money.</p>	Program proposal still to be submitted to Government.	1 July 2018.
Postal Concessions for the Blind	To ensure policy and program is fit-for-purpose in the context of swiftly changing technologies and the NDIS.	Redesign is expected to occur in the 2017 calendar year.	<p>Independent consultants have been engaged to conduct a review of print disability policy and programs and make recommendations.</p> <p>They will be consulted with all key stakeholders including users of these programs.</p>	Renewed focus on people with print disability who are most disadvantaged in their access to relevant supports.	Program proposal still to be submitted to Government.	1 July 2018.

Program (Sub Program or Activity)	Reason for redesign	How long is redesign expected to take?	What consultation will occur?	What will be the expected impact of redesign?	What changes are likely to be made?	When are new grants expected to commence?
<p>Disability Employment Services Employment Support Service (ESS)</p>	<p>Disability Employment Services (DES) achieves modest outcomes that have been declining in recent years.</p> <p>Around 32 per cent of participants are in employment three months after completing a period of assistance in DES.</p> <p>This is below program targets.</p> <p>To improve DES performance, the Department has been engaging with the disability employment sector ways to improve performance.</p>	<p>The Department is currently seeking the Government's endorsement for reforms to DES.</p>	<p>Extensive consultation with the disability employment sector has taken place since 2015.</p> <p>In April 2015, the Government established a Disability Employment Taskforce to consult with the disability community on the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach to disability employment.</p> <p>This included two rounds of consultation supported by an issues paper in mid-2015 and a discussion paper in late 2015.</p> <p>Participants in the consultations included: people with disability and their families, and their representative organisation; DES providers and their representatives; and employers.</p> <p>Based on feedback received during these consultations, a discussion paper was developed with proposed directions of reforms, which was released in late 2016.</p> <p>154 submissions from the public were received in response to the discussion paper.</p> <p>The Department also established a Disability Employment Reform Reference Group, comprised of sector representatives to obtain feedback on the discussion paper.</p>	<p>The reforms aim to improve DES performance at getting more people with disability into employment.</p>	<p>The Department is currently seeking Government endorsement for reforms to DES.</p>	<p>Subject to Government approval, the new DES model will be introduced when current contracts cease in 2018.</p>
<p>Family and Relationship Services (FaRS)</p>	<p>To ensure that grants activities conform with relevant legislation and continue to achieve Government policy objectives.</p>	<p>Approximately 12 months, ahead of existing grants expiring in 2019.</p>	<p>Redesign will be conducted in consultation with the sector.</p>	<p>Redesign will strive to minimise impacts to service delivery, where appropriate.</p>	<p>Program proposal still to be submitted to Government.</p>	<p>1 July 2019.</p>