

Community Affairs Committee

Examination of Budget Estimates 2007-2008

Additional Information Received

CONSOLIDATED VOLUME 4

**FAMILIES, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO**

Outcomes 3 & 4

26 FEBRUARY 2008

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATING TO THE EXAMINATION OF BUDGET EXPENDITURE FOR 2007-2008

Included in this volume are answers to written and oral questions taken on notice and tabled papers relating to the budget estimates hearings on 28 and 29 May 2007

* Please note that 20 March 2008 is the proposed date for answers to be presented to the President of the Senate where this date is indicated

FAMILIES, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

Senator	Quest. No.	Outcome 3: Output group 3.1 – Support for Families	Vol. 4 Page No.	Date tabled in the Senate or presented out of session*
	T9 tabled at hearing	Australia's international Social Security agreements May 2007		13.09.07
	T13 tabled at hearing	How much the Department will spend on publicity for the Social Security Agreement between Australia and Greece		13.09.07
	T15 tabled at hearing	Report by Ernst & Young for Department of Family and Community Services: Costing Methodology for the Family Relationships Services Program		13.09.07
Stephens	178	Family Tax Benefit Part A		26.10.07
Stephens	181	FTB customers		26.10.07
Siewert	183	Family Relationships Centres		26.10.07
Siewert	184	FRSP online – on demand reports		26.10.07
Fielding	185, 186	FRSP cost methodology report		26.10.07
Siewert	187	FRSP online		26.10.07
Siewert	188	FRSP online - cost		26.10.07
Siewert	189	FRSP online - evaluation		26.10.07
Siewert	190	FRSP cost methodology report		26.10.07
Stephens	196, 197	Men and Family Relationship Services		26.10.07
Stephens	198, 199	Family Relationships Education		26.10.07
Stephens	243, 245	Early childhood		26.10.07
Ludwig	285, 286	Family Relationships Centres		26.10.07
Ludwig	312	Performance review		26.10.07
Stephens	182	Family Tax Benefit Part A		20.03.08
Siewert	191	FRSP cost methodology report		20.03.08
Evans	192	FTB reconciliation		20.03.08
Stephens	193	FTB		20.03.08
Stephens	194-195	Assistance to families at risk of overpayment		20.03.08
Stephens	201	Parenting program		20.03.08
Stephens	180	FRB customer numbers		20.03.08
Stephens	200	Family relationships		20.03.08
Outcome 3: Output group 3.2 – Child Support				
Siewert	202	2006 Budget child support reforms		26.10.07
Stephens	3, 222	Children's Services - CDEP		26.10.07

Outcome 3: Output group 3.3 – Child Care Support

Stephens	203	Child Care Benefit (CCB)	26.10.07
Siewert	208	JET child care	26.10.07
Siewert	209	JET child care – grandfathered group	26.10.07
Siewert	210-212, 214-216	JET child care	26.10.07
Siewert	219	Long day care	26.10.07
Stephens	226	Fraudulent claims for CCB	26.10.07
Stephens	227	CCB - grandparent	26.10.07
Stephens	228	Child care management system	26.10.07
Stephens	229	Services participating in the CCMS pilot	26.10.07
Stephens	230-232	Child care management system	26.10.07
Stephens	237	Child care fees	26.10.07
Stephens	240	Child Care Benefit	26.10.07
Stephens	246	Preschool	26.10.07
Stephens	247	OECD report	26.10.07
Stephens	250	Additional In Home Care places	26.10.07

Outcome 4: Output group 4.1 – Housing Support

	T7 tabled at hearing	Innovation and investment fund – SAAP V: summary of projects as at May 2007. Total number of approved projects 42	13.09.07
Lundy	260	National housing priorities	20.03.08
Lundy	261	Rent assistance	20.03.08
Lundy	263	Long term accommodation outcomes of SAAP clients	20.03.08
Lundy	264	Percentage of SAAP clients who used the service more than once	20.03.08
Lundy	265	SAAP tenancy support and boarding houses	20.03.08
Lundy	266-287	Homelessness	20.03.08

Outcome 4: Output group 4.2 – Supporting Financial Management

Stephens	267	Financial management programs funded under Output group 4.2	26.10.07
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Outcome 4: Output group 4.3 – Community Recovery

Stephens	268	Community recovery programs funded under Output group 4.3	26.10.07
Stephens	269	Reconnecting people assistance package programs funded under Output group 4.3	26.10.07

Outcome 4: Output group 4.4 – Community Partnership and Delivery

Evans	271	VSEG applications (ANAO report)	26.10.07
Evans	272	VSEG	26.10.07
Evans	273	Eastern Access Community Health Group	26.10.07
Stephens	277	Community engagement programs funded under Output group 4.4	26.10.07
Evans	274-275	VSEG applications	20.03.08
Stephens	276	Local Answers	20.03.08

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2007-08 Budget Estimates, May 2007

T9 CA19 – 29 May – Senator Moore
AUSTRALIA’S INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENTS
Current @ May 2007

Australia currently has 18 Social Security Agreements in force. The former Social Security Agreement with the United Kingdom terminated with effect from 1 March 2001. Four new Social Security Agreements have been signed with Switzerland, Korea, Japan and Greece, but are not yet in force. A Supplementary Agreement has also been signed with Germany, but is not yet in force, and includes only double coverage provisions.

COUNTRY	DATE SIGNED	DATE COMMENCED	AUSTRALIAN PAYMENTS*	SUPERANNUATION GUARANTEE PROVISIONS #	STATUS
Austria	1/4/92 Protocol signed 26/6/01	1/12/92 1/10/02	Age, disability support, wife, carer, parenting payment single, bereavement	No	Under review to include double coverage provisions
Belgium	20/11/02	1/7/05	Age, disability support	Yes	Current
Canada	4/7/88 26/7/01	1/9/89 1/1/03	Age, disability support, wife, carer, parenting payment single, bereavement	No	Under review to include double coverage provisions
Chile	25/3/03	1/7/04	Age, disability support	Yes	Current
Croatia	13/5/03	1/7/04	Age, disability support	Yes	Current
Cyprus	12/5/92	1/1/93	Age, disability support, wife, carer, parenting payment single (widows), bereavement	No	Current

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COUNTRY	DATE SIGNED	DATE COMMENCED	AUSTRALIAN PAYMENTS*	SUPERANNUATION GUARANTEE PROVISIONS #	STATUS
Denmark	1/7/99	1/1/01	Age, disability support, parenting payment single	No	Current
Germany	13/12/00	1/1/03	Age, disability support, wife, carer, parenting payment single, bereavement, double orphan	No	Supplementary Agreement on double coverage provisions signed on 9/2/07 - expected to come into force in July 2008
Supplementary Agreement <i>*Not yet in force</i>	9/2/07				
Greece <i>*Not yet in force</i>	23/5/07		Age	Yes	Expected to come into force some time in 2008
Ireland	8/4/91 9/6/05	1/4/92 1/1/06	Age, disability support, parenting payment single, bereavement	Yes	Current
Italy	23/4/86 13/9/93	1/9/88 1/10/00	Age, disability support, wife, carer, parenting payment single (widows), bereavement, double orphan	No	Under review to include double coverage provisions
Japan <i>*Not yet in</i>	27/2/07		Age	Yes	Expected to come into force

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COUNTRY	DATE SIGNED	DATE COMMENCED	AUSTRALIAN PAYMENTS*	SUPERANNUATION GUARANTEE PROVISIONS #	STATUS
<i>force</i>					in January 2009
Korea <i>*Not yet in force</i>	6/12/06		Age	Yes	Expected to come into force in July 2008
Malta	15/8/90 16/6/04	1/7/91 1/7/05	Age, disability support, parenting payment single (widows), bereavement (widows)	No	Current
The Netherlands	1/1/91 2/7/01	1/4/92 1/4/03	Age, disability support	Yes	Current
New Zealand	4/8/43 15/4/49 5/10/86 31/10/88 19/7/94 28/3/01	1/9/43 1/7/49 1/10/87 1/4/88 1/1/95 (amended 7/9/95 and 2/7/98) 1/7/02	Age, disability support, carer (for partners of DSP recipients only).	No	Current
Norway	2/12/05	1/1/07	Age, disability support	Yes	Current
Portugal	30/4/91, 3/9/01	1/11/92, 1/10/02	Age, disability support, wife, carer, parenting payment single (widows) bereavement, double orphan	Yes	Current
Slovenia	19/12/02	1/1/04	Age, disability support	No	Current

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COUNTRY	DATE SIGNED	DATE COMMENCED	AUSTRALIAN PAYMENTS*	SUPERANNUATION GUARANTEE PROVISIONS #	STATUS
Spain	10/2/90 31/1/02	3/6/91 1/1/03	Age, disability support, wife, carer, parenting payment single, bereavement, double orphan	No	Under review to include double coverage provisions
Switzerland <i>*Not yet in force</i>	9/10/06		Age, disability support, parenting payment single (widows), carer, bereavement	Yes	Expected to come into force in January 2008

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COUNTRY	DATE SIGNED	DATE COMMENCED	AUSTRALIAN PAYMENTS*	SUPERANNUATION GUARANTEE PROVISIONS #	STATUS
United States of America	27/9/01	1/10/02	Age, disability support, carer, parenting payment single, bereavement	Yes	Current

*Disability Support Pension is restricted to people who are severely disabled.

This applies to seconded workers and for Australia applies to the Superannuation Guarantee.

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T13 – CA 19 – 29 May 2007 – Senator Moore

Q: At Budget Estimates hearings on 29 May 2007, Senator Moore asked Ms Stawyskyj how much the department will spend on publicity for the Social Security Agreement between Australia and Greece.

A: The Department has been allocated \$110,450 for publicity and community consultation on the Agreement. Community consultation will begin in June with the posting of information to Greek community groups, welfare organisations and State and Territory Governments.

Fact Sheets will be printed and distributed to key organisations in 2008 for distribution as needed.

Advertisements will be placed in major metropolitan, primary regional and Greek language newspapers in 2008, closer to the commencement date of the Agreement. There will also be some SBS radio.

Centrelink will undertake some separate publicity in 2008 that will involve articles in the News for Seniors, Australian Pension News and The Journey Magazine.

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CA 95 – 29 May – Senator Siewert Reference T15

I am pleased to table a copy of the report for the Committee.

Senator Siewert asked:

“What was the cost of the privacy impact assessment undertaken in respect of the FRSP On Line System.

I can confirm that the consultancy is being undertaken by Integrity Information Solutions and the cost of the consultancy is \$35, 200 inclusive of GST and exclusive of travel costs.

Senator Siewert asked:

“If we could clarify what delays had occurred in respect of the FRSP On Line implementation and reporting.

I can advise that the implementation was scheduled to commence July 2006 and phase 1 commenced December 2006.

In respect of FRSP On Line reporting functionality delays, I need to correct the record. There are no delays expected to the delivery of the systems reporting functionality which is scheduled to be completed in December 2007

The delays referred to by Ms Fleming relate to the Department’s commitment to provide the Sector with quarterly reports. These have been deferred to 2007/08 as the Sector has not provided sufficient data, to warrant production of these reports at this stage.

Robyn Fleming
Branch Manager
Family Relationship Services Branch

FaCSIA

29 May 2007

Secretariat note:

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The report referred to above by Ernst & Young - *Costing Methodology for the Family Relationships Services Program, 2007* has not been included in the electronic version of this volume but was tabled in the Senate on 13 September 2007.

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 178

Topic: Family Tax Benefit Part A

Hansard Page: CA90 29/5

Senator Stephens asked:

Can you tell us how many families receive it as a lump sum?

Answer:

Data on the number of customers receiving Family Tax Benefit (FTB) as a lump sum is publicly available in the Department's Annual Report – see Table 2.38, page 172 of the 2005-06 Annual Report.

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 181

Topic: FTB customers

Hansard Page: CA92 29/5

Senator Stephens asked:

Could you provide numbers of single income and dual income part B customers?

Answer:

As at 25 May 2007, there were 862,477 single income families and 653,164 dual income families whose Family Tax Benefit Part B for the 2005-06 financial year had been reconciled.

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Question No: 183

Topic: Family Relationships Centres

Hansard Page: CA93 29/5

Senator Siewert asked:

Of the estimated 10 per cent that are not deemed to be meeting the Approval Requirements, are these new providers or existing providers? What are you doing to address the quality issues that have been identified?

Answer:

The Portfolio Budget Statement estimates 10 per cent of existing service providers will be deemed to be partially compliant with one or more of the 15 Approval Requirements criteria. In such cases FaCSIA works with the service provider to determine what work needs to be done to ensure that the provider is able to meet the criteria within an agreed timeframe. The service provider is then subsequently independently re-assessed against the criteria.

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Question No: 184

Topic: FRSP Online - On Demand Reports

Hansard Page: CA96 29/5

Senator Siewert asked:

The on-demand data is due to be completed by December 2007. How far behind time are you?

Answer:

The on-demand reports project is on schedule to be completed by December 2007.

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 185

Topic: FRSP Cost Methodology Report

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Fielding asked:

What is the Department doing to ensure service viability of FRSP into the future and how will it avoid a situation where funding falls behind true costs of service delivery?

Answer:

In 2005 the government provided a 30 per cent funding increase for all current FRSP services without an increase in client numbers to support service viability.

Continuing FRSP service viability is demonstrated by the active participation of independent non-government organisations in the delivery of FRSP services. As independent bodies the participation of these organisations in the FRSP indicates that the funding provided is appropriate to maintain service viability and meet the costs of service delivery.

FaCSIA continues to work with the sector to ensure it understands the broader operating environment for service providers.

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 186

Topic: FRSP Cost Methodology Report

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Fielding asked:

Has the sector been provided with any resources to respond to the review or participate in consultation?

Answer:

The FRSP Cost Methodology report is still being considered by the department. The department has committed \$420,000 in 2007-08 to Family Relationship Services Australia, the new industry representative body, to assist it to establish itself and to be the vehicle for supporting the sector on a range of issues including costs, workforce and quality assurance.

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 187

Topic: FRSP Online

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Does the Department anticipate any difficulties with relying on the data collection system for either service level performance management or program level administration? If so, what are they?

Answer:

The department does not anticipate any difficulties with relying on the data collection system for service level performance management or program level administration.

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 188

Topic: FRSP Online - Cost

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

What is the total cost of the FRSP Online system?

Answer:

The total cost of developing the FRSP Online system to 30 June 2007 is \$843,978.40, which is made up of information and communication technology development costs, staffing costs, training materials and expert advice.

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Question No: 189

Topic: FRSP Online - Evaluation

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Will FRSP Online be subject to evaluation?

Answer:

FRSP Online will be evaluated.

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Question No: 190

Topic: FRSP Cost Methodology Report

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

The Ernst and Young Report on Costing Methodology for FRSP programs raises the prospect of the Attorney General's Department and FaCSIA not fully funding an organisation's FRSP service delivery where other sources of revenues exist - including donations, auspicing bodies or fee income (page 5, 1.2, para 2).

- a) Could fee income from FRSP ever realistically support the infrastructure necessary to run these sub-programs?
- b) How might this impact on the commitment to providing accessible and high quality services?
- c) Would a reliance on fees-only income orient the services to only those who can pay?
- d) Does the Government have a position on fully funding the programs where these other sources of funding are not available?
- e) In what other programs has this been the case, and how have the risks been mitigated?
- f) Is there any consideration of removing fees and implementing a two tiered system, with a publicly funded service for those who can't afford to pay and a reliance on private practitioners for those who can?
- g) Given that there are no specific recommendations in the report, will FaCSIA consult with the sector before considering the approach any further? If not, why not?

Answer:

The report recognises that in addition to government funding FRSP service providers as independent non-government organisations derive income from a range of sources, such as private donations from auspice bodies or revenue generated through fees, to support the delivery of family relationship services. The report simply recognises these other financial inputs as necessary elements in the development of an FRSP cost methodology. The department does not propose that FRSP service delivery can or should be supported solely from fee income.

There has been no consideration of removing fees and implementing a two tiered system. The existing fee policy provides, above a minimum standard of exemptions designed to ensure accessibility for those on low incomes such as health care card recipients, flexibility for FRSP service providers to respond to the needs of their local communities.

The department is still considering the report and what further consultations may be required with the sector.

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 196

Topic: Men and Family Relationship Services

Hansard Page: written

Senator Stephens asked:

What is the budget for the item Men and Family Relationship Services in the 2007/08 year?

Answer:

The 2007/08 total appropriation for Men and Family Relationship Services (MFRS) is \$6.513 million (GST exclusive).

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 197

Topic: Men and Family Relationships

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

- h) How many organisations are funded to provide Men and Family Relationships Services?
- i) Is there a standard contract length for these services?
- j) What is the current expiration of these contracts?
- k) When is the next contract round due?
- l) What is the total value of these contracts?

Answer:

There are 48 service providers operating in 123 locations funded to deliver Men and Family Relationship Services (MFRS).

A standard contract length is 3 years.

The 2005/08 funding agreements expire on 30 June 2008 and the 2006/09 funding agreements expire on 30 June 2009.

The next competitive selection process for the New Family Law system funding will be advertised on 4 August 2007 and there will be a further 20 new MFRS as part of this funding package.

For 2007/08 the total value of these contracts will be \$6.513 million (GST exclusive).

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Question No: 198

Topic: Family Relationships Education

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

What is the budget for the item Family Relationships Education in the 2007/08 year?

Answer:

Since 2006-07, the Family Relationships Education (FRE) and Family Relationship Skills Training (FRST) have been combined into a single program, Family Relationship Education and Skills Training (FREST).

The budget for FREST in 2007/08 is \$11.513 million.

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Question No: 199

Topic: Family Relationships Education

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

- a) How many organisations are funded to provide Family Relationships Education?
- b) Is there a standard contract length for these services?
- c) What is the current expiration of these contracts?
- d) When is the next contract round due?
- e) What is the total value of these contracts?

Answer:

As per our response to Question on Notice 198, since 2006-07 the Family Relationship Education (FRE) and Family Relationship Skills Training (FRST) have been combined into a single program, Family Relationship Education and Skills Training (FREST).

There are 49 service providers operating in 107 locations funded to deliver Family Relationship Education and Skills Training (FREST).

A standard contract length is 3 years.

Some current contracts expire on 30 June 2008, and some expire on 30 June 2009.

The next competitive selection process for the Family Relationship Services Program, including FREST, will be advertised on Saturday 4 August 2007.

In 2006-07 the total value of contracts with current FREST providers is \$9.513 million.

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Question No: 243

Topic: Early Childhood

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Does Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) have policy responsibility for early childhood education? Is this shared with Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST)? What is the division of responsibility between the agencies?

Answer:

The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) does not have policy responsibility for early childhood education. This is the responsibility of the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

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Question No: 245

Topic: Early Childhood

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

The Budget measures arising out of COAG decision on early childhood has \$1m for FACSIA. What is this funding for? When is the Intergovernmental Agreement on national standards expected to be signed?

Answer:

Funding of \$0.915 million over two years has been provided as part of the Commonwealth's contribution to a joint taskforce to develop an intergovernmental agreement on a national approach to quality assurance and regulations for early childhood education and care.

The intergovernmental agreement will be provided to COAG for consideration in early 2008 (the 2008 COAG meetings have not yet been scheduled).

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Question No: 285

Topic: Family Relationships Centres

Hansard Page: Written (Transferred from AGD)

Senator Ludwig asked:

Regarding contractual and funding arrangements with FRC's, is the department able to indicate what happens to any funding that is left unspent by the centres that were provided by government? Does this money return to government, or is it retained by the FRC's?

Answer:

Under the current three-year Funding Agreements, at the end of the Agreement all unspent funds must be returned to the Commonwealth.

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 286

Topic: Family Relationships Centres

Hansard Page: Written (Transferred from AGD)

Senator Ludwig asked:

Has the department sought to identify any over or underspends by FRCs in relation to the funding provided to them? If so, what did you find? Were there any unspent funds, and what happened to them? If not, why not? Will you be beginning to undertake this?

Answer:

As a part of their funding obligations, Family Relationship Centres (FRC) organisations submit Annual Audited Financial Statements (AAFS) by October 31 each year. As Family Relationship Centres have only been operating since 1 July 2006, Annual Audited Financial Statements are not due until October 31, 2007. At the end date of the three-year Funding Agreement, any unspent funds are required to be returned to the Commonwealth.

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Question No: 312

Topic: Performance Review

Hansard Page: Written (*Transferred from AGD*)

Senator Ludwig asked:

- a) Regarding the performance review planned for December this year.
- i) (AGD to answer)
 - ii) (AGD to answer)
 - iii) In the interim:
 - 1) What monitoring and compliance arrangements are in place for FRCs?
 - 2) Are you able to indicate what monitoring and compliance is actually being done? How do these compare to the standards that are in place?

Answer:

FaCSIA's monitoring and compliance arrangements for FRC's include:

- for the establishment of an FRC assessment against the approval requirements and assessment of all service plans;
- annual audited financial statements;
- annual status reports;
- annual site visits by FaCSIA staff;
- monthly service delivery data collected through FRSP Online; and
- monitoring of complaints and actions taken.

FaCSIA state and territory offices also conduct at least one site visit annually to all service providers to discuss their performance and the reports that they have completed. There are a series of risk indicators against which organisations are assessed, and if a service has an adverse risk rating, a higher level of monitoring is undertaken.

All 15 service providers were assessed as compliant prior to the commencement of the FRC services. FaCSIA follows up with FRC service providers on their contractual obligations as outlined above on an annual cycle.

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Question No: 182

Topic: Family Tax Benefit Part A

Hansard Page: CA92 29/5

Senator Stephens asked:

Is the department aware of how many families who would otherwise be eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part A are ineligible on the grounds that their child receives the Youth Allowance?

Answer:

No. The department is unable to answer this question due to the complex differences between Family Tax Benefit and Youth Allowance and the many different circumstances of individual families and children.

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Question No: 191

Topic: FRSP Cost Methodology Report

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

The report suggests that the conceptual understanding of the data structure for FRSP programs had been lost by the Department over time. What are the proposed steps to address this? Will this include consultation with the sector? If not, why not?

Answer:

The report does not suggest that the conceptual understanding of the data structure for the FRSP has been lost by the department over time. The aim of the report was to increase the department's understanding of FRSP service providers costing models. The FRSP is a program in which independent non-government bodies receive funding to deliver services to the community. As independent non-government organisations FRSP providers have a range of financial management practices that meet appropriate financial accountability requirements. However, the report noted that the diversity of service delivery models and accounting systems across 100 plus providers did not lend itself to the development of a single costing model.

The department is still considering the report. It has agreed with the sector representative body, Family Relationship Services Australia, to establish a working group to consider next steps.

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Question No: 192

Topic: FTB Reconciliation

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Evans asked:

Please provide a full update to all tables provided in response to question on notice 284 from the Supplementary Estimates hearings in November 2006.

Answer:

As advised in the response to Question on Notice 284 from the Supplementary Estimates hearings in November 2006, the department has published the relevant tables in the 2006-07 Annual Report.

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Question No: 193

Topic: FTB

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

How many FTB Part (A) families receive payments for children aged 0-2?

How many FTB Part (B) families receive payments for children aged 0-2?

Answer:

As at 28 December 2007, 514,363 families with children aged 0-2 were receiving fortnightly payments for FTB Part A.

As at 28 December 2007, 468,056 families with children aged 0-2 were receiving fortnightly payments for FTB Part B.

These figures include some families who were receiving a zero rate of payment under the More Choice for Families options.

Information on children is not readily available in respect of the approximately 10 per cent of customers who receive their FTB via a lump sum from the ATO or Centrelink.

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Question No: 194

Topic: Assistance to Families at Risk of Overpayment

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Who is undertaking the review of the *Assistance to Families at Risk of Overpayment* measure? What are the terms of reference for the review? Can a copy be provided to the Committee? On what date was any external consultant engaged to undertake this review? What is the value of the consultancy contract? When the evaluation report expected to be completed?

Answer:

FACSIA has responsibility for undertaking the review of the *Assistance to Families at Risk of Overpayment* measure.

There are no formal terms of reference in place for this review, but it will focus on evaluating the effectiveness, appropriateness and efficiency of the measure in helping families avoid FTB overpayments. ORIMA Research was engaged on 18 October 2006 to undertake a customer survey, in-depth case studies and key informant interviews to contribute to the review. The value of the consultancy contract is \$129,230. A draft evaluation report has been completed. The evaluation report is expected to be finalised within the next couple of months.

Release of the report is a decision for the Minister. The review is scheduled to be completed during the 2007-08 financial year, which will then be considered by the Government.

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Question No: 195

Topic: Assistance to Families at Risk of Overpayment

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

What is the total Budget in 2007/08 for the *Assistance to Families at Risk of Overpayment* measure? Have the incidence of FTB overpayments declined since this initiative was introduced? What has been the level of FTB overpayment since the initiative was introduced?

Answer:

The total budget in 2007-08 for the *Assistance to Families at Risk of Overpayment* measure is \$3.5 million, as indicated in the 2007-08 Portfolio Budget Statement.

The incidence of Family Tax Benefit (FTB) reconciliation overpayments has fallen since this initiative was introduced:

- 9 per cent of reconciled customers had received an average overpayment of \$1,269 for 2004-05 at 29 December 2006.
- 8 per cent of reconciled customers received an average overpayment of \$1,237 for 2005-06 at 28 December 2007.

Other measures to reduce or prevent FTB overpayments have also been introduced in this period.

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Question No: 201

Topic: Parenting Program

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Please provide a complete list of all programs and sub-programs funded under the administered item 'Parenting' in Output Group 3.1, including for each:

- the budget in 2007/08;
- at what point, if any, in the forward estimates this funding ceases; and
- how much of the funding in each forward estimate year is already committed under a contract or other agreement.

Answer:

The budget for the parenting program in 07-08 is \$78.259 million and includes:

Program (sub programs)	2007-08 budget (GST exclusive)
Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) <i>Australian Families and Children Council (AFACC)</i> <i>National Child Protection Clearinghouse (NCPC)</i> <i>Responding Early Assisting Children (REACH)</i> <i>National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)</i>	\$4,449,000
Services for Families with Children (SFWC) <i>Playgroups</i> <i>Responding Early Assisting Children (REACH)</i> <i>Out of Scopes (OOS)</i> <i>Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)</i> <i>Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)</i>	\$12,163,000
Stronger Families and Communities Strategy: Families Initiatives <i>Invest to Grow (ItG)</i> <i>Communities for Children (CfC)</i>	\$53,929,000
Indigenous Children Programme (ICP)	\$5,719,000
Australian Research Alliance for Children Youth (ARACY)	\$2,000,000

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 180

Topic: FTB Customer numbers

Hansard Page: CA92 29/5

Senator Stephens asked:

Do you actually have this in a table (number of children, lump sum claimants) that you could provide to the Committee?

Answer:

Data on the number of children in families receiving lump sum payments is not readily available.

The following table provides an estimate of the number of children (in age groups) of Family Tax Benefit (FTB) lump sum customers.

The total number of children of lump sum customers (201,200) has been estimated using the average number of children of instalment customers (1.95) and applying that to the number of customers who had claimed a lump sum for the 2005-06 entitlement year by 30 March 2007 (103,300).

The age breakdowns have been estimated using the number of children of current FTB Part A instalment customers as at the end of April 2007, which was provided at the May 2007 Budget Estimates hearing.

Age group	Lump Sum
Children under 13	149,800
Children 13 to 15	33,500
Children 16 to 17	9,800
Children 18 to 20	7,400
Children 21 to 24	700
Total	201,200

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Output Group: 3.1

Question No: 200

Topic: Family Relationships

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Please provide a complete list of all programs and sub-programs funded under the Administered item 'Family Relationships' in Output Group 3.1, including for each:

- the budget in 2007/08;
- at what point, if any, in the forward estimates this funding ceases; and
- how much of the funding in each forward estimate year is already committed under a contract or other agreement?

Answer:

Table One outlines, for programs and sub-programs under Family Relationships, the 2007-08 appropriation for each of these elements and the amounts committed for 2007-11.

In respect of the Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP) and its sub-programs:

- Sugar Industry Reform Counselling lapses in 2007-2008.
- Funding for Drought Counselling lapses in 2007-2008 and is replaced by a new measure Drought Response Teams which commences effective of February 2008 and lapses end of June 2009.
- All other sub-programs under the FRSP are ongoing.

National Illicit Drug Strategy:

- National Illicit Drug Strategy (NIDS) is committed for 2007-08 and not yet committed for 2008-11.

Indigenous Family Violence Programs:

- The Family Violence Partnership Program (FVPP) combined information includes all agreements as at 01 February 2008.

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Table 1
Family Relationships Appropriations & Commitments

Family Relationships Branch	2007/08 \$m		2008/09 \$m		2009/10 \$m		2010/11 \$m	
	Appropriation	Commitment	Appropriation	Commitment	Appropriation	Commitment	Appropriation	Commitment
Family Relationships	77.073		86.199		80.888		82.426	
Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP)	64.007	Fully Committed	73.382	Fully Committed	67.818	55.053*	69.108	48.602*
National Illicit Drug Strategy (NIDS)	3.044	Fully Committed	3.101	No present Commitments	3.166	No present Commitments	3.228	No present Commitments
Family Violence Regional Activities Program FVRAP	4.522	Fully Committed	4.608	Fully committed	4.697	Fully committed	4.785	No present Commitments
Family Violence Partnership Program FVPP	13.822	12.900	13.016	0.910	10.718	No present commitments	10.921	No present commitments

* There is a market expectation that funding agreements expiring in the previous year maybe renewed on a rolling 3 year basis.

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Output Group: 3.2

Question No: 202

Topic: 2006 Budget Child Support Reforms

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Can the department provide an update on these measures, specifically how the 2006-07 funding has been allocated and the extent to which child support agency clients have accessed counselling or dispute resolution services?

Answer:

The following table outlines additional funding in the 2006-07 Budget under the Child Support Scheme Reforms to assist parents to reach agreement on parenting and child support arrangements (as in Budget Paper No.2, 2006-07).

FaCSIA's 2006-07 funding was provided to allow Centrelink staff to provide training to Family Relationship Centre staff on Family Assistance, including the interactions with the Child Support Scheme reforms. The Attorney General's Department and Department of Human Services are able to provide additional information on the allocation and expenditure of funds allocated to them.

Data from the Child Support Agency shows that 4,850 customers were referred to the Family Relationship Advice Line or Family Relationship Centres in the period July 2006 to April 2007. (Note that those transferred to the Advice Line may be referred on to a face to face service but in many cases are provided with a service by Advice Line Parenting Advisers who are trained social workers).

Child Support Reforms — Family Relationship Centres

Expense (\$m)

	<i>2006- 07</i>	<i>2007- 08</i>	<i>2008- 09</i>	<i>2009- 10</i>
Attorney-General's Department	9.2	13.2	15.2	8.1
Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7
Department of Human Services	0.2	..	-0.2	-0.4
Total	10.1	13.8	15.8	8.4

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Output Group: 3.3

Question No: 003

Topic: Children's Services - CDEP

Hansard Page: CA13 28/5

Senator Stephens asked:

Providers affected by the CDEP Budget Measure (Child Care). How many FaCSIA CDEP positions will be converted into jobs by 2009-10? Could you also provide a breakdown by portfolio?

Answer:

FaCSIA has been funded to convert 200 positions in eligible Australian Government funded child care services which are currently subsidised by CDEP into jobs by 2009-10.

General information about the measure is available on the Department's website, at http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/budget/budget2007-07_indigenous_5.htm

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Question No: 222

Topic: Children's Services - CDEP

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

How many CDEP workers are used in FaCSIA funded children's services?

Answer:

FaCSIA is not the employer of CDEP workers in children's services.

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Question No: 203

Topic: Child Care Benefit (CCB)

Hansard Page: CA128 29/5

Senator Stephens asked:

Are you able to advise us about the average income level of those people who incurred a debt?

Answer:

Data as at 30 March 2007

Average income of CCB debtor						
Financial Year	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Average Income (\$)	60,600	64,600	67,800	71,000	73,900	76,500

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Question No: 208

Topic: JET Child Care

Hansard Page: CA137 29/5

Senator Siewert asked:

Could you let us know how much JET information goes out to Centrelink?

Answer:

The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) provides a range of information and program services on the JET Child Care fee assistance program to Centrelink.

Policy guidance is provided by way of the Guide to Family Assistance, a policy helpdesk and advice on policy changes. FaCSIA also provides JET Child Care fee assistance Factsheets and has input into Centrelink's own publications.

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Question No: 209

Topic: JET Child Care – Grandfathered Group

Hansard Page: CA138 29/5

Senator Siewert asked:

Please provide the figure for how many will be in the grandfathered group for 2006-07?

Answer:

It is estimated that around 5,500 individual parents will receive Jet Child Care fee assistance under the “grandfathered” provisions in 2006-07.

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Question No: 210

Topic: JET Child Care

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Were JET Child Care Fee Assistance recipients notified of the proposed changes to the JET Child Care Fee Assistance program and informed that if they were not studying and receiving JET Child Care Fee Assistance on July 3 2006 they would no longer be eligible for JET Child Care Fee Assistance?

Answer:

All current (as at June 2006) JET Child Care fee assistance recipients were written to about the changes prior to July 2006. As well, all child care services were also notified of the changes and a special edition of the Child Care News on the JET Child Care changes was issued in June 2006.

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Question No: 211

Topic: JET Child Care

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Under the guidelines for eligibility for JET Child Care Fee Assistance as a “grandfathered” student what was considered “sufficient” previous usage of JET Child Care Fee Assistance to qualify for further JET Child Care Fee Assistance?

Answer:

Details of the application of the transitional arrangements for JET Child Care fee assistance customers are set out in the Family Assistance Guide which is available from the Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs website www.facsia.gov.au.

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Question No: 212

Topic: JET Child Care

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Prior to July 1 2006 what was the percentage of JET Child Care Fee Assistance recipients who were undertaking study for degrees or education courses of more than 12 months duration?

Answer:

This information is not available.

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Question No: 214

Topic: JET Child Care

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

How many people were receiving JET Childcare Fee Assistance in June 2006? How many people are currently receiving JET Childcare Fee Assistance?

Answer:

The number of parents assisted at any one time changes through out a financial year; and point in time figures do not accurately reflect the total number of parents assisted by the JET Child Care fee assistance program in any one financial year.

For this reason statistics on the JET Child Care fee assistance program are generally provided in terms of the number of individual parents assisted through out a financial year. For the year of 2005-06 around 18,180 individual parents were assisted.

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Question No: 215

Topic: JET Child Care

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

How many JET places were available in 2006/07 and 2007/08?

Answer:

There is no set limit of places under the JET Child Care fee assistance program. Rather the program operates as a demand driven program up to the limit of available funds each year. In 2006-07 it is estimated that around 21,500 individual parents will be assisted with around 35,000 assisted in 2007-08.

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Question No: 216

Topic: JET Child Care

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

What is the average number of children per parent in receipt of JET Child Care Fee Assistance?

Answer:

There are around 1.6 children per parent assisted by the JET Child Care fee assistance program.

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Question No: 219

Topic: Long Day Care

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Does the Department run any ongoing or ad hoc programs that provide Long Day Care grants for:

- Major Capital Works
- Minor Capital Works
- Equipment Grants

Answer:

As part of the 2007-08 Budget, the Australian Government is providing \$3 million over three years for capital funding to eligible Long Day Care services to undertake upgrades to existing facilities or infrastructure in order to meet the needs of their community. Further information on the capital funding for Long Day Care services is available from http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/childcare/services-cc_support_payments.htm.

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Question No: 226

Topic: Fraudulent Claims for CCB

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Without prejudicing any on-going investigation or court proceedings, and without naming any party currently under investigation, since 1 July 2006:

1. How many investigations have been undertaken into fraudulent claims for the Child Care Benefit?
2. How many of these investigations relate to actions of: (i) child care service operators; (ii) parents?
3. How many briefs have been forwarded to prosecutors?

Answer:

There are 18 current investigations into allegations regarding fraudulent claims of Child Care Benefit.

All of these investigations are in relation to actions of Child Care Service Operators. At this point in time one of these investigations may also relate to the actions of parents linked to the Service.

No briefs have been referred to prosecutors since 1 July 2006. Three briefs were referred prior to this date and are currently with the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions. The department is involved in regular consultation with prosecutors on other investigations prior to formal referral.

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Question No: 227

Topic: CCB - Grandparent

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

How many grandparents receive the Grandparent Child Care Benefit? What is the average payment made?

Answer:

The total number of customers who received Grandparent Child Care Benefit for the 2005-2006 financial year (4 July 2005 to 2 July 2006) was 2,050.

The average amount of Grandparent Child Care Benefit paid in the 2005-2006 financial year (4 July 2005 to 2 July 2006) was \$4,645 per customer. This amount refers to the total Child Care Benefit paid as fee relief, for any week of the financial year, where the customer was eligible for Grandparent Child Care Benefit.

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Question No: 228

Topic: Child Care Management System

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

What is the total budget for the child care management system? Has this been increased since it was first announced? If so, by how much and when?

Answer:

The total budget for the Child Care Management System is detailed on page 17 of the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements 2006-07 and on pages 68 and 70 of the Agency Additional Estimates Statements – Centrelink 2006-07. This has not increased since it was first announced.

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Question No: 229

Topic: Services Participating in the CCMS Pilot

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

The roll out of the CCMS pilot was expected to commence on 1 July 2007. How many services, by service type, will be involved in the pilot?

Answer:

The number of participants has not been finalised. Participants are still being encouraged to apply to ensure a broad cross section of the sector takes part in the pilot and there is capacity to add additional services as the pilot progresses, if required. All service types will be represented in the pilot.

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Question No: 230

Topic: Child Care Management System

Hansard Page: written

Senator Stephens asked:

Is the department aware of any problems faced by child care operators whose own software cannot interact with the new Management System?

Answer:

FaCSIA continues to work with child care operators to identify and address issues raised by the sector in transitioning to the CCMS.

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Question No: 231

Topic: Child Care Management System

Hansard Page: written

Senator Stephens asked:

What happens to operators whose software is incompatible with the new CCMS. How long have they got to comply? What would happen to a service who does not use the CCMS?

Answer:

Under the *Family Assistance Act 1999* child care services will be required to use the Child Care Management System (CCMS). Services must interact with the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs using software registered for CCMS purposes.

A service must commence operating under CCMS from the application day determined by the Secretary. All services must be using CCMS before 1 July 2009, unless the Secretary determines a later date because of technical difficulties beyond the service's control.

Services that fail to commence operating under CCMS within the required timeframe will be in breach of the conditions for continued approval and the service's approval may be suspended by the Secretary.

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Question No: 232

Topic: Child Care Management System

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

What financial compensation is available to services to help implement the new system?
How many services is this expected to cover? Does this funding include money for face to face training of service operators in their new obligations, including the obligation to report information to FaCSIA or face fines?

Answer:

All child care services will receive financial assistance to support their transition to the Child Care Management System. This assistance will be capped at a maximum amount for each organisation. Financial assistance can be used by services to support any costs associated with their transition to the Child Care Management System.

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Question No: 237

Topic: Child Care Fees

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Using the most up to date information available to the Department, what is the average fee, average gap fee, and the highest and lowest of these fees, in each State and Territory and for Australia as a whole?

Answer:

The department collects information on fees bi-annually through the Australian Government Census of Child Care Services, most recently conducted in May 2006.

Average fee details, based on preliminary May 2006 Census data, are contained in the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services 2007*, volume 2, Chapter 14 and tables in the attachment to Chapter 14. As the May 2006 Census has not been finalised additional information is not available at this time.

Information on gap fees is detailed in Minister Brough's media release of 29 May 2007, entitled "Government Pays More Than Half of Child Care Costs For Most Common Family Types and Usage".

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Question No: 240

Topic: Child Care Benefit

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

What is the average number of children per family receiving CCB?

Answer:

Based on quarterly Child Care Benefit (CCB) usage data, on average there are approximately 1.4 children per customer receiving CCB.

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Output Group: 3.3

Question No: 246

Topic: Preschool

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Has FaCSIA provided any advice to Minister Brough on preschool for all four year olds?

Answer:

FaCSIA provides advice concerning a range of matters to the Minister.

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Output Group: 3.3

Question No: 247

Topic: OECD Report

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Minister Brough's press release dated 29 May 2007 on child care costs refers to the findings of an OECD report. What is the title of that report and on what page in that report are the Minister's claims supported?

Answer:

The title of the OECD report mentioned in Minister Brough's press release of 29 May 2007 is "Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care" (2006).

On page 114 of this report, the OECD concludes that 'Australia is unusual among the liberal economies in that fee support (the Child Care Benefit and a new 30% child care tax rebate) is available to 98% of parents, with low-income parents receiving a higher benefit. This means that approximately 60% of expenditure on all early childhood services is public, with parents contributing in total about 38% of costs.'

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Output Group: 3.3

Question No: 250

Topic: Additional In Home Care places

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

What funding is available under the Choice and Flexibility in Child Care component of the Stronger Families and Communities Initiative? What projects and programs have been funded? When does that funding run out? How much of this program remains uncommitted?

Answer:

In April 2004, funding of \$125.3 million over four years was committed to continue the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy - Choice and Flexibility in Child Care.

Under Choice and Flexibility in Child Care, funds have been provided for In Home Care, the Long Day Care Incentive Scheme and parts of the Quality Assurance System. The funds were appropriated to Child Care Services Support and the Special Appropriation for Child Care Benefit.

The decision was made in the 2007-08 Budget that the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy - Choice and Flexibility in Child Care funding will be ongoing.

The level of commitment of the Child Care Services Support appropriation has been provided in Question on Notice 248.

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T7 INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT FUND – SAAP V

Innovation and Investment Fund – Summary of Projects as at May 2007
Total Number of Approved projects 42

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Australian Capital Territory – Projects Agreed as at May 2007
\$0.173m for 2006-07

Number of Projects - 2	Target Group
Supporting Couch Surfers	Young people aged 15-18 years.
Transitional support for young people exiting youth detention	Young people exiting youth detention aged 16 – 25 years.

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New South Wales – Projects Agreed as at May 2007
\$0.615m for 2006-07

Number of Projects 5	Target Group
Enhancement of Accommodation and Brokerage Services.	Cross target
Test and Validate the SAAP Client Complexity Tool	Multiple & complex needs
NSW Women's Refuge Movement Working Party Inc (WRM)	Women's Refuges
Women's Refuge Outreach Support	Women & children escaping domestic violence, including Indigenous women
Service Enhancement	Youth

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Project	
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Northern Territory – Projects Agreed as at May 2007
\$0.268m in 2006-07

Number of Projects 5	Target Group
Tenancy Support ¹	Indigenous people
Family Violence Intervention - men's program.	Indigenous families
Therapeutic Interventions for Children	Children accessing SAAP services
Interventions for Family Violence	Indigenous families Violence
Assertive engagement for disengaged young people and their families	Young people

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Queensland – Projects Agreed as at May 2007
\$1.507m in 2006-07

Number of Projects 1	Target Group
Early Intervention Services Pilot at six sites.	Young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds

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CA136 28 May 2007 – Senator Lundy

South Australia – Projects Agreed as at May 2007
\$0.988m in 2006-07

Number of Projects 14	Target Group
Accommodation Services	Cross target
Northern Family Accommodation	Families
Women exiting supported accommodation	Single women generally with psychiatric disability
Domestic Violence Crisis Service	Women and women with children experiencing domestic violence.
Outreach case management and support	Single adults
Outreach Support to Homeless Families	Families
Educational Pathways for Aboriginal women escaping domestic violence.	Indigenous women experiencing domestic violence
Research and development of a 'whole of family' approach to the delivery of Indigenous domestic violence services.	Families experiencing domestic violence
In service child support providing specialist child care	Homeless children and young women

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and parent support.	
An intervention strategy aiming to strengthen the resources abilities and potential of children and young people	Children and families
Outreach support to families who have approached Emergency Accommodation Services SA for Assistance.	Families
Early intervention for people on the housing waiting list	General
Domestic violence prevention – working with perpetrators to break the cycle	Domestic violence
A program supporting children who have been subjected to domestic violence.	Domestic violence

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Tasmania– Projects Agreed as at May 2007
\$0.364m in 2006-07

Number of Projects 2	Target Group
Early identification and Referral Training and Information Package for Professionals	People with complex needs
Transitional Support Model for Prisoners at risk of Homelessness	Pre and post release prisoners

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Victoria – Projects Agreed as at May 2007
\$1.948m in 2006-07

Number of Projects 3	Target Group
Intensive Case Management for SAAP Clients with Multiple and Complex Needs	SAAP clients with multiple and complex needs who do not qualify for assistance under Victoria's Multiple and Complex Needs Initiative
Linking Women Experiencing Family Violence with the Private Rental Market	Women and families experiencing or at risk of family violence
Youth Futures Program	Young people aged 15-25 years including young mothers

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Western Australia – Projects Agreed as at May 2007
\$0.838m in 2006-07

Number of Projects 10	Target Group
Research Meals Program	Cross target
Intensive Support for Street Present People	Cross target
Intensive Support for Homeless Families	Families
Intensive Support for Homeless Single Adults	Single Adults with High and Complex Needs
Post Crisis Support for women escaping Domestic Violence	Women and women with children escaping domestic violence.
Support for Accompanying Children in Domestic Violence Refuges	Women and children escaping domestic violence
Post Crisis Support for Homeless Young People	Young people
Early Intervention and Prevention Program for women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	Women and domestic violence
Domestic Violence early intervention outreach pilot	Women experiencing domestic violence and/or perpetrators
Skills development and short term housing for young	Young people

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families and young people.	
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2007-08 Budget Estimates, May 2007

Output Group: 4.1

Question No: 260

Topic: National Housing Priorities

Hansard Page: CA 124

Senator Lundy asked:

Can you please provide breakdown figure for the National Housing Priorities fund (p 150 of PBS)?

Answer:

Under the Homelessness and Housing item on page 150 of PBS the grant of \$4.2 million includes:

\$395,000 for the National Housing Priorities fund

\$420,000 for the National Housing Research fund

\$2,040,000 for National Homelessness Strategy and

\$1,325,000 for Household Organisational Management Expenses Program

The National Housing Priorities fund includes allocations to a range of activities including the Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA). Funding to CHFA will be \$236,692.00 for 2007-08 (GST exclusive).

National Housing Priorities allocations for 2007-08 will be used to progress work being undertaken as part of the development of a National Affordable Housing Agreement.

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Output Group: 4.1

... Question No: 261

Topic: Rent Assistance

Hansard Page: CA127 28/5

Senator Lundy asked:

Are you able to provide a state by state breakdown of the lowest, highest and average rent paid by Rent Assistance recipients?

Answer:

Rent Assistance is a national program, so the minimum rent needed to qualify for Rent Assistance is the same in all states, but varies between family types. Details are published in *A Guide to Australian Government Payments* which is available at <http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/publications/co029.htm>.

From 20 March 2007 the minimum rent a single person must pay to qualify for Rent Assistance has been \$92.60 per fortnight.

The average fortnightly rent paid by Rent Assistance recipients in each state at 2 March 2007 were :

	Average fortnightly rent
NSW	\$333
VIC	\$302
QLD	\$339
WA	\$310
SA	\$291
TAS	\$283
NT	\$336
ACT	\$357

Meaningful information is not available about the maximum rents paid in each State.

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2007-08 Budget Estimates, May 2007

Output Group: 4.1

Question No: 263

Topic: Long term accommodation outcomes of SAAP clients

Hansard Page: CA 134 28/5

Senator Lundy asked:

What proportion of SAAP clients find long term accommodation after six months, a year, two years? Do you follow that up and do you have the figures?

Answer:

The proportion of SAAP clients exiting to independent housing and not returning within six months was 45.5 per cent in 2004-05 (latest available data). This piece of information is reported annually as part of the SAAP performance indicators published in the Report on Government Services by the Productivity Commission. There is no published information available on the proportion of SAAP clients who find long term accommodation after one year or two years.

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2007-08 Budget Estimates, May 2007

Output Group: 4.1

Question No: 264

Topic: Percentage of SAAP clients who used the service more than once

Hansard Page: CA 135 28/5

Senator Lundy asked:

In relation to SAAP data collection, the numbers down the bottom 180,000 versus 106,500, what percentage does that mean for clients that are returning more than once? Could you also provide the percentage of those that have had more than one contact over the last 5 years?

Answer:

According to the SAAP National Data Collection Annual Report 2005-06 published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, it was estimated that 25.6 per cent of SAAP clients had more than one contact with SAAP during the financial year. There is no data available over five years.

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Output Group: 4.1

Question No: 265

Topic: SAAP Tenancy support and boarding houses

Hansard Page: CA 135 28/5

Senator Lundy asked:

Can you provide, by state governments the distribution of funds used to support boarding houses through SAAP.

Answer:

This information is not collected.

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2007-08 Budget Estimates, May 2007

Output Group: 4.1

Question No: 266

Topic: Homelessness

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Lundy asked:

Is the national action plan listing the objectives for the Innovation and Investment Fund publicly available?

Answer:

Information on the National Action Plan and the objectives of the Innovation and Investment Fund are available on the FaHCSIA website.

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Output Group: 4.1

Question No: 287

Topic: Homelessness

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Lundy asked:

Can you nominate all the programs that address and seek to prevent homelessness?

Answer:

All programs which assist people in their day-to-day lives also contribute to preventing homelessness, including income support, employment services and community development programs. Details of these programs are provided on relevant Australian Government websites.

FaHCSIA has many programs and initiatives targeted to disadvantaged individuals and families who may be at risk of homelessness, including mental health initiatives, the Women's Safety Agenda, various Indigenous programs, housing and financial well-being programs and the Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA).

The Australian Government's targeted homelessness programs include:

- The National Homelessness Strategy (NHS);
- The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP);
- Reconnect;
- The Job Placement Employment and Training Programme (JPET);
- The Household Organisational Management Expenses(HOME) Advice Program;
- The Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP);
- Crisis Payment; and
- Innovative Health Services for Homeless Youth (IHSY).

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Output Group: 4.2

Question No: 267

Topic: Financial Management Programs Funded under Output Group 4.2

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Please provide a complete list of all programs and sub-programs funded under the administered item 'Financial Management' in Output Group 4.2, including for each:

- the budget in 2007/08;
- at what point, if any, in the forward estimates this funding ceases; and
- how much of the funding in each forward estimate year is already committed under a contract or other agreement.

Answer:

The allocation for 2007-08 is: \$0.498m (National Information Centre on Retirement Investments); \$2.697m (Financial Counselling); \$4.064m (Indigenous Money Management); \$32.051m (Emergency Relief); and \$0.5m (Gambling Research).

Funding for each of the components continues across the forward estimates period.

Under multi-year funding agreements, \$15m has been committed for Emergency Relief and \$2.4m for Indigenous Money Management in 2008-09.

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Output Group: 4.3

Question No: 268

Topic: Community Recovery Programs Funded under Output Group 4.3

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Please provide a complete list of all programs and sub-programs funded under the administered item 'Community Recovery' in Output Group 4.3, including for each:

- the budget in 2007/08;
- at what point, if any, in the forward estimates this funding ceases; and
- how much of the funding in each forward estimate year is already committed under a contract or other agreement.

Answer:

Program: Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP)

The AGDRP is a special appropriation and the 2007-08 budget is referenced on page 53 of the *Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) 2007-08*. Funding for the AGDRP does not cease in the forward estimates.

Sub-programs funded under the AGDRP are:

- Hunter Region and Central Coast Storms June 2007;
- Tropical Cyclone Jacob March 2007;
- Tropical Cyclone George March 2007;
- Western Australian Bushfires February 2007;
- Victorian Bushfires December 2006; and
- Tasmanian Bushfires December 2006.

The notional budget of each sub-program is determined by the number of claims paid, based on data available after the event.

Claims for the AGDRP can be lodged within six months after the determination of the disaster under Section 36 of the *Social Security Act 1991*.

No funding is committed under a contract or other agreement.

Program: Ex-Gratia Payments to East Timor Medical Evacuees

The 2007-08 budget is referenced on page 140 of the *PBS 2007-08*. The funding ceases in 2007-08. No funding is committed under a contract or other agreement.

Program: Ex-Gratia Assistance for Cyclone Larry

The funding ceases in 2006-07.

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Program: Ex-Gratia Assistance for Tsunami Aftermath
The funding ceases in 2006-07.

Program: Ex-Gratia Assistance for Victims of the London Bombings
The funding ceases in 2006-07.

Program: Ex-Gratia Payments to Victims and Family Members of the Bali Terrorist Attacks
The 2007-08 budget is referenced on page 140 of the *PBS 2007-08*. Funding ceases in 2007-08.

Program: Ex-Gratia Payments to Victims of Terrorist Bombings in Egypt
The funding ceases in 2006-07.

Program: Pandemic Influenza Preparedness
The 2007-08 budget is referenced on page 140 of the *PBS 2007-08*. Funding ceases in 2009-10. No funding is committed under a contract or agreement.

Program: Reconnecting People Assistance Package
The 2007-08 budget is referenced on page 140 of the *PBS 2007-08*. Funding ceases in 2009-10. Funding of \$35,090 is committed under a short form funding agreement in 2007-08.

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Output Group: 4.3

Question No: 269

Topic: Reconnecting People Assistance Package Programs Funded under Output Group 4.3

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Please provide a complete list of all programs and sub-programs funded under the administered item 'Reconnecting People Assistance Package' in Output Group 4.4, including for each:

- the budget in 2007/08;
- at what point, if any, in the forward estimates this funding ceases; and
- how much of the funding in each forward estimate year is already committed under a contract or other agreement.

Answer:

The 2007-08 budget for the Reconnecting People Assistance Package is referenced on page 140 of the *Portfolio Budget Statements 2007-08*. Funding ceases in 2009-10. Funding of \$35,090 is committed under a short form funding agreement in 2007-08.

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Output Group: 4.4

Question No: 271

Topic: VSEG Applications (ANAO Report)

Hansard Page: CA28 28/5

Senator Evans asked:

When were the payments for the 2004 applications actually made to organisations?

Answer:

The letters of offer for Volunteer Small Equipment Grants (VSEG) Round One 2004 were made 5 May 2004 and almost all payments were made in a six week period from mid May to end June 2004, depending on the time taken for organisations to respond.

The letters of offer for VSEG Round Two 2004 were made 1 August 2004, and the majority of payments were made in a three week period from mid August to early September 2004. Almost all remaining payments were paid by mid December 2004, depending on the time taken by organisations to respond.

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Output Group: 4.4

Question No: 272

Topic: VSEG Applications

Hansard Page: CA32 28/5

Senator Evans asked:

Can you confirm that the Minister approved funding under VSEG Round 2 to applications that the department considered should not be funded and that were not consistent with the guidelines.

Answer:

The Minister did not approve any applications under VSEG 2004 Round Two that were not consistent with the program guidelines or that the department considered should not be funded.

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2007-08 Budget Estimates, May 2007

Output Group: 4.4

Question No: 273

Topic: Eastern Access Community Health Group

Hansard Page: CA 36 28/5

Senator Evans asked:

What was the difference between what was announced in the election campaign and what was funded for the Eastern Access Community Health Group.

Answer:

The then Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator the Hon Kay Patterson, announced a commitment of nearly \$165,000 to support community health programs delivered by Eastern Access Community Health (EACH). The funding included \$99,000 for the *Risk It Recharge* Program for young people and \$65,000 for the purchase of two vehicles, including a minibus.

Eastern Access Community Health Group received \$165,000 funding for four youth projects, including \$18,703 for *Risk It Recharge*, and \$66,000 for two vehicles. The specific youth projects and budget items were determined in consultation with EACH during funding agreement negotiations. The funding breakdown is shown in the table below.

Funding	Project
\$53, 273	<i>Community and Mental Health Alliance (CAMHA)</i> - a day activity program for young people with mental health issues, focusing on community engagement and vocational development.
\$9,555	<i>Creating Options</i> – a social group 17-25 year olds with first presentation psychosis
\$18,703	<i>Risk it Recharge</i> – an educational program for youth disconnected from the education system, including personal and life skill development for young people.
\$17,469	<i>Youth Health Clinic</i> – Nursing support to the Youth Health Clinic at EACH and purchase of equipment and supplies.
\$66,000	Contribution towards the purchase of two vehicles – to support outreach mental health services.
\$165,000	TOTAL FUNDING (GST Exclusive)

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Output Group: 4.4

Question No: 277

Topic: Community Engagement Programs Funded under Output Group 4.4

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

Please provide a complete list of all programs and sub-programs funded under the administered item 'Community Engagement' in Output Group 4.4, including for each:

- The budget in 2007/08.
- At what point, if any, in the forward estimates this funding ceases; and
- How much of the funding in each forward estimate year is already committed under a contract or other agreement.

Answer:

The Community Engagement administered item consists of the following programs: Community Business Partnership Program, National Secretariat Program, Volunteer Management Program and Stronger Families and Communities Strategy – Community Initiatives (this program is subdivided into Local Answers and Volunteer Small Equipment Grants).

Provision of detailed information on the 2007-08 budget or commitments under contract or agreement in each forward estimates year would require a significant and onerous diversion of departmental resources, which is not justified in these circumstances.

The Community Business Partnership sub-program ceases funding in the 2009-10 financial year, and funding for the other sub-programs continues over the forward estimates to the 2010-11 financial year.

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2007-08 Budget Estimates, May 2007

Output Group: 4.4

Question No: 274

Topic: VSEG Applications

Hansard Page: CA41 28/5

Senator Evans asked:

Can you provide a list by electorate of the approved applications for the 2 rounds?

Answer:

A list of organisations by electorate approved for funding under the two rounds of the Volunteer Small Equipment Grants 2004 was included in the response to Questions 30 and 31 at the 2004-05 Supplementary Budget Estimates.

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2007-08 Budget Estimates, May 2007

Output Group: 4.4

Question No: 275

Topic: VSEG

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Evans asked:

For each of the 2006 volunteer small equipment grant recipients listed on the Department's website at http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/sfsc-vseg_2006.htm.

Please indicate (a) the name of the organisation in receipt of the grant, (b) the federal electorate in which the grant recipient is based, (c) the value of the grant, and (d) the purpose of the grant.

Answer:

Organisations in receipt of grants are published on the department's website. Provision of (b), (c) and (d) would involve a significant diversion of departmental resources and this additional work cannot be justified in these circumstances.

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Output Group: 4.4

Question No: 276

Topic: Local Answers

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Stephens asked:

How much funding remains uncommitted in the Local Answers program?

Answer:

As at 30 January 2008, \$1.7 million remains uncommitted in the Local Answers program for 2007-08. Future funding is a matter for the government.