

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12-232

OUTCOME 0: Whole of Portfolio

Topic: Access and Equity

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 2

Senator: Senator Di Natale

Question:

Does your Department provide guidelines to potential clients in a language other than English? If yes, how many and which languages? Why not more given the rich linguistic background of your clients. If no, why not?

Answer:

The term 'guidelines' for this Question on Notice has been interpreted to include Clinical as well as Program Guidelines.

The Department of Health and Ageing provides guidelines in a language other than English. There are approximately 37 languages (as listed below) and these represent a comprehensive cross-section of multicultural communities in Australia:

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander translations for Creole, Kalaw Kawaw Ya and Meriam Mir languages;
- Albanian;
- Arabic;
- Bosnian;
- Chinese (traditional, simplified, Cantonese & Mandarin);
- Croatian;
- Dinka;
- Dutch;
- Farsi (Persian);
- Filipino-Tagalog;
- French;
- German;
- Greek;
- Hebrew;
- Hindi;
- Hungarian;
- Indonesian;
- Italian;

- Japanese;
- Khmer (Cambodian);
- Korean;
- Macedonian;
- Maltese;
- Malaysian;
- Polish;
- Portugese;
- Romanian;
- Russian;
- Serbian;
- Spanish;
- Thai;
- Turkish;
- Ukranian;
- Urdu; and
- Vietnamese.

In determining which language/s a guideline will be made available, the Department takes into consideration a number of factors. These generally include:

- determining the target audience and the demographics of this audience;
- determining the most prevalent community language groups, with the aim of covering the areas of greatest need;
- sourcing data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics to assist in identifying the top priority languages; and
- sourcing data from the Department's Communications area regarding the most commonly spoken languages in Australian homes outside the English language.

There are Guidelines that are not made available in other languages. With these:

- access to translation and interpretation services are available;
- in some cases, additional translations can be made upon request or as the need arises;
- for Guidelines that are available on the Internet, a link is provided that enables the text to be translated into a range of languages; and
- for Guidelines aimed at the medical profession (such as practitioners and optometrists), translations are not required as these professionals must demonstrate that English is their native language or successfully complete the International English Language Testing System exam.