

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND**  
**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO**  
**2013-14 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number:** 7

**Question No:** 424

**Topic:** Municipal Services

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Scullion** asked:

The Minister recently announced an additional one year's funding for municipal services in the states (excluding the Northern Territory). Provide a list of communities covered by that funding. Why is the Commonwealth involved in this when municipal services is the province of state and local government? Is it true that it has been the government's objective to hand over this responsibility for municipal services to state and local government for some years? Why has this not occurred?

**Answer:**

The Municipal and Essential Services Program (MUNS) provides funding to support the delivery of municipal and essential services to remote communities in Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania.

The 2013-14 funding offers are currently being made to MUNS providers. Final confirmed numbers of communities and outstations supported are not yet available.

The Commonwealth provides funding under the MUNS Program to support the efforts of state and local governments, who have primary responsibility for the delivery of these services. The Commonwealth has historically funded the provision of municipal services to Indigenous communities, for example, through the Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP) and the Australian Remote Indigenous Accommodation (ARIA) program. In 2009, under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, the Commonwealth, the States and the Northern Territory agreed to work together towards “a proposal for clearer roles and responsibilities and funding with respect to municipal services and ongoing maintenance of infrastructure and essential services in remote areas”. The Commonwealth has convened a multilateral working group, consisting of members from all States, the Northern Territory, and local government, to develop a proposal for Council of Australian Governments (COAG) consideration.