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SENATE

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Estimates

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SENATE

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 19 June 2014

Members in attendance: Senators Boyce, Carol Brown, Moore, Seselja, Siewert, Smith.

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

In Attendance

Senator Fierravanti-Wells, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services

Department of Social Services

Executive

Mr Finn Pratt, Secretary

Ms Barbara Bennett, Deputy Secretary

Mr Michael Lye, Acting Deputy Secretary

Cross Outcomes

Dr Tim Reddel, Group Manager, Programme Office

Ms Janean Richards, Group Manager, Legal and Compliance

Ms Trish Woolley, Branch Manager, Civil Society and Programme Delivery Policy

Mr Leo Kennedy, Branch Manager, Programme Operations

Ms Chantelle Stratford, Acting Branch Manager, Programme Systems and Strategy

Ms Helen Board, Branch Manager, Programme Performance

Ms Elizabeth Hefren-Webb, Acting Group Manager, Families

Committee met at 16:29.

CHAIR (Senator Boyce): I declare open this hearing of the Community Affairs Legislation Committee. The Senate has referred to the committee the particulars of expenditure for 2014-15 and related documents for the portfolios of Health and Social Services, including Human Services. The committee may also examine the annual reports of the departments and agencies appearing before it. The committee is due to report to the Senate on Thursday, June 2014 and has fixed 25 July as the date for the return of answers to questions taken on notice. Senators are reminded that any written questions on notice should be provided to the committee secretariat by Thursday, 26 June. Today's hearing is only about the examination of discretionary grant funding within the Social Services portfolio, as per the agenda we have.

Under standing order 26, the committee must take all evidence in public session, including answers to questions on notice. I remind all witnesses that, in giving evidence to the committee, they are protected by a parliamentary privilege. It is unlawful for anyone to threaten or disadvantage a witness on account of evidence given to a committee and such action may be treated by the Senate as a contempt. It is also a contempt to give false or misleading evidence to a committee. The Senate by resolution in 1999 endorsed the following test of relevance of questions at estimates. Any questions going to the operations or financial positions to the departments and agencies which are seeking funds in the estimates are relevant questions for the purposes of estimates hearings. I remind officers that the Senate has resolved that there are no areas in connection with the expenditure of public funds where any person has discretion to withhold details or explanations from the parliament or its committees, unless the parliament has provided expressly otherwise.

The Senate has also resolved that an officer of the department of the Commonwealth shall not be asked to give opinions on matter of policy and shall be given reasonable opportunity to refer questions asked of the officer to superior officers or to a minister. This resolution prohibits only questions asking for opinions on matters of policy and does not preclude questions asking for explanations of policy or factual questions about whether and how policies were adopted. I particularly draw the attention of witnesses to an order of the Senate of 13 May 2009 specifying the process by which a claim of public interest immunity should be raised.

Public interest immunity claims

That the Senate—

(a) notes that ministers and officers have continued to refuse to provide information to Senate committees without properly raising claims of public interest immunity as required by past resolutions of the Senate;

(b) reaffirms the principles of past resolutions of the Senate by this order, to provide ministers and officers with guidance as to the proper process for raising public interest immunity claims and to consolidate those past resolutions of the Senate;

(c) orders that the following operate as an order of continuing effect:

(1) If:

(a) a Senate committee, or a senator in the course of proceedings of a committee, requests information or a document from a Commonwealth department or agency; and

(b) an officer of the department or agency to whom the request is directed believes that it may not be in the public interest to disclose the information or document to the committee, the officer shall state to the committee the ground on which the officer believes that it may not be in the public interest to disclose the information or document to the committee, and specify the harm to the public interest that could result from the disclosure of the information or document.

(2) If, after receiving the officer's statement under paragraph (1), the committee or the senator requests the officer to refer the question of the disclosure of the information or document to a responsible minister, the officer shall refer that question to the minister.

(3) If a minister, on a reference by an officer under paragraph (2), concludes that it would not be in the public interest to disclose the information or document to the committee, the minister shall provide to the committee a statement of the ground for that conclusion, specifying the harm to the public interest that could result from the disclosure of the information or document.

(4) A minister, in a statement under paragraph (3), shall indicate whether the harm to the public interest that could result from the disclosure of the information or document to the committee could result only from the publication of the information or document by the committee, or could result, equally or in part, from the disclosure of the information or document to the committee as in camera evidence.

(5) If, after considering a statement by a minister provided under paragraph (3), the committee concludes that the statement does not sufficiently justify the withholding of the information or document from the committee, the committee shall report the matter to the Senate.

(6) A decision by a committee not to report a matter to the Senate under paragraph (5) does not prevent a senator from raising the matter in the Senate in accordance with other procedures of the Senate.

(7) A statement that information or a document is not published, or is confidential, or consists of advice to, or internal deliberations of, government, in the absence of specification of the harm to the public interest that could result from the disclosure of the information or document, is not a statement that meets the requirements of paragraph (1) or (4).

(8) If a minister concludes that a statement under paragraph (3) should more appropriately be made by the head of an agency, by reason of the independence of that agency from ministerial direction or control, the minister shall inform the committee of that conclusion and the reason for that conclusion, and shall refer the matter to the head of the agency, who shall then be required to provide a statement in accordance with paragraph (3).

(d) requires the Procedure Committee to review the operation of this order and report to the Senate by 20 August 2009.

(13 May 2009 J.1941)

(Extract, Senate Standing Orders, pp 124-125)

I welcome Senator the Honourable Fierravanti-Wells, representing the Minister for Social Services, the departmental secretary, Mr Pratt, and officers of the Department of Social Services. Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement?

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: I do. Thank you for the opportunity to make a brief statement. The Australian government is committed to delivering an efficient and effective grants system for civil society. The consolidation of grant operations into the Department of Social Services has empowered the government to implement significant changes to contracting arrangements to assist the sector by reducing red tape, improving efficiency and simplifying their interface with Commonwealth, and concurrently to reduce the administrative burden to the Commonwealth.

Let me be clear. The government was faced with a disaster when we took office. Between 2008-09 and 2012-13, Labor delivered deficits totalling \$191 billion. Labor left additional projected deficits of \$123 billion over the forward estimates. Labor presided over the fastest deterioration of our debt position in modern history with a projected \$667 billion of debt in 10 years without policy change. This year, Labor's debt will cost us \$12 billion in interest payments—that is, \$1 billion every month. Therefore, cutting red tape and streamlining administrative arrangements meant providing an in effect funding boost to the sector. It meant people from the back office can be redeployed to the frontline, providing capacity and capability increases.

At this committee's budget Senate estimates hearing, Senator Cameron insisted the information that is being provided to the Australian public by the government today was being unreasonably withheld. At the time, Senator Cameron made the outrageous accusation that the hesitation to not disclose the information that is being released today was part of a political cover-up. His accusation has, today, been shown to be nothing more than a political smear against the hardworking officials of the Department of Social Services who are implementing this government's election commitments to make life easier for civil society. Senator Cameron was told that there were probity issues and that the department's legal advice precluded the officials from providing the information to the committee prior to its public release. If Senator Cameron had been on this side of the table, he would have acted in the same way. This morning the information that Senator Cameron insisted the government was hiding

was uploaded onto the department's website. Thousands of pages of information have been released by the government incorporating the details relating to grant activity programs, including the funding arrangements.

This information forms the basis of the government's important reforms in commencing the deregulation of a sector that has for far too long been burdened by bureaucracy and red tape. This government does not see civil society as an extension of the government; we see civil society as an independent sector.

I will now provide a brief overview of the reforms for the committee's benefit. Charities and not-for-profit organisations play a crucial role in responding to issues in communities across Australia. The Australian government is making sure their vital role continues to strengthen and grow by getting rid of useless red tape; helping them become more innovative and collaborative; sharing benchmarking and service delivery trends over time; cleaning up government processes to stop duplication and reduce administrative waste; and providing greater flexibility to drive local solutions to local issues.

I will now turn to what was announced in the 2014 budget. Close to one third of the 12,900 discretionary grants will expire on 30 June 2014. From 1 July 2014, to ensure essential services continue while improvements to grant arrangements are being implemented, the government will provide six-month extensions for the majority of existing grants; 12-month extensions for grants transitioning into longer-term initiatives such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme and aged-care Commonwealth Home Support Program; and five-year grant agreements for Family and Relationship Services, Communities for Children Facilitating Partners, and Family Law Services. This delivers on the government's pre-election commitment to provide longer-term agreements to the sector for these critical services.

Improvements to social services grant programs align with the government's civil society agenda, deliver significant benefits to the sector and promote community input to drive local solutions to local problems. Improvements to grant funding arrangements include new grant programs that are better suited to what communities need and want; a single coherent structure that streamlines 18 discretionary grant programs into seven; longer-term agreements that increase certainty and make planning easier; working towards one consolidated agreement for each provider; and simpler financial and performance reporting. Applications have opened today for funding under these new arrangements to ensure new agreements are in place from 1 January 2015.

I will conclude by highlighting some key facts. The Australian government is implementing improvements to grants which will provide more stable, sustainable and efficient arrangements for providers. The grant improvement process will ease regulatory reporting and administrative burdens, and reduce inefficiencies and duplication.

To ensure essential services continue while improvements are being implemented, the government will provide six-month or 12-months extensions from 1 July for existing eligible grant recipients. The government has also committed more than \$1.5 billion over five years to more than 250 providers of Family and Relationship Services, Communities for Children Facilitating Partners, and family law services. As I indicated, as part of the grant improvement process, programs have been streamlined from 18 discretionary grant programs into seven programs.

The applications have opened today for funding under these new arrangements, and the new way of working contributes to the government's aim to reduce red tape and regulation by at least \$1 billion a year. Contrary to Senator Cameron's conspiracy theory, there is no political cover-up. There is no secret conspiracy.

CHAIR: Thank you, Senator Fierravanti-Wells. Would you be able to table that statement, please. Thank you, Mr Pratt and Senator Fierravanti-Wells for the provision of this very comprehensive information on the grants programs. Is it the wish of the committee that the statement be accepted as evidence? There being no objection, it is so ordered. Mr Pratt, you have more information to give us.

Mr Pratt: Madam Chair, I do not have an opening statement, but I wish to make a couple of comments. With your permission, my colleagues will be able to explain some of the material we have, which we will provide. As promised at our estimates hearing two weeks ago, we now have information on the program and subprogram expenditure in 2013-14. We also have information on the new subprogram funding, which is subject to the selection process which opened today. We have in the room experts who can take us through the funding, the selection processes and the grant mechanics for the new programs. What we do not have are the disability experts, the ageing experts, the housing experts—that sort of thing. We are focused on the generic administration of the grants programs. Ms Bennett is going to start by explaining the material that is in the blue folders that you have and also, with your permission, Madam Chair, some extra information, which we would like to table.

CHAIR: Does the committee accept the tabling of that information? Yes. Thank you, Mr Pratt.

Mr Pratt: Thank you. Ms Woolley will run through very briefly the funding arrangements for one of our key programs as an example of what we have supplied in that package. If that is acceptable, Madam Chair, I will hand over to Ms Bennett.

CHAIR: That is fine, thank you. Ms Bennett?

Ms Bennett: You received information early this afternoon which was material that was printed from the website. The information that we are attaching now is a summary to work you through some of the questions that were raised at the last estimates hearing. It is summarising much of the material that you have. In the pack that we have just provided to you, in the yellow folders, we have the honeycomb document—

CHAIR: The very famous honeycomb document, yes.

Ms Bennett: which was provided to you at the last hearing. We have also provided an overview of a framework in which to view the changes, ranging from the relationships as set out by Senator Fierravanti-Wells, how the programs have been changed, what the applications will be, right through to the reporting, streamlined performance and new governance arrangements. We provide an example at the bottom of this page—it is a case study—of what these new arrangements will mean for an organisation.

CHAIR: Is that at the bottom of the green page?

Ms Bennett: This paper, Senator Boyce. It is titled 'The new way of working together'. That is an example that we have been able to draw from organisations that we work with.

The next 14 A4 pages explain the elements of the honeycomb. They explain the connection between page 98 in the PBS—page 98 is outcome 2—but through the rest of the PBS, where you can see the programs that are administered by the department, across numerous programs they explain the changes that have been made between the year 2013-14 and what is reflected in the 2014-15 years. It then explains the flow-through and other issues that have impacted and it sets out how the selection process for those grant programs and activities and components will be conducted. After those 14 summary pages, we set out an explanation of how the grant assessment centre will operate, setting out how we will have an application help desk, a quality framework and probity requirements. The next attachment sets out the time frames for the selection process leading us to grant announcements and executions. The final attachment is an updated list of our communication activities. This was tabled at the last estimates, but we have updated it as at today.

If the committee would like, what I propose is to take the first of the A4s and talk you through it as a sample of how it works—of how the information has been provided. If you look at the honeycomb, that sample is under the Families and Communities Programme and it is the activity 'Families and children'.

CHAIR: That would be very helpful, Ms Bennett.

Ms Bennett: Ms Woolley will talk about how the A4s work and then work you through the first one.

Ms Woolley: We wanted to step you through the links back to the honeycomb document and the A4 pages to explain how that material maps. Each of the A4 pages relates to a grants activity which sits beneath each of our broadbanded programs that have grants activities within them. So under the Families and Communities Programme, you will find the following A4s in your pack: 'Family and children', 'Settlement services', 'Financial wellbeing and capability', 'Families and communities service improvement', 'Strengthening communities', and 'National initiatives'.

The only activity that does not match back to the honeycomb—is missing from that—is one relating to 'Civil society', which is essentially a new activity which we have constructed that would house the new initiatives such as the Community Business Partnership and the National Centre of Excellence. We have not depicted one for that because it relates to a new budget measure which is detailed in the PBS, on page 98, around the funding for the Community Business Partnership.

Under 'Ageing and aged care programmes' there is one for the Aged Care Workforce Fund, and one for the Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grants Fund. The other two aged-care programs that are not represented in that pack are the Home Support Program and the Residential and Flexible Care Programme. Again, we have not provided those because there is no activity in the construct of this reform space for those. They have largely already been broadbanded under health and ageing

Senator SIEWERT: So there is no change?

Ms Woolley: There is no change.

Senator SIEWERT: A clarification question, going back to the civil society: in other words there was no grant. There is nothing that would transition in from there?

Ms Woolley: Correct.

Senator SIEWERT: All of the grants have transitioned into the other parts of the program?

Ms Woolley: That is correct. So in the Housing and Homelessness Programme you will find the A4 'Housing and homelessness service improvement and sector support', which details grants there. And under Disability Mental Health and Carers Programme you will find an A4 relating to 'Disability employment', 'Disability and carer support', 'Disability and carer service improvement and sector support', 'Community mental health' and one detailing with the 'National Disability Insurance Scheme transition'.

If you look at this against the honeycomb, you will see that each of these cluster around these programs, showing you how the transition has worked. If we move to that first A4 that you have, the one that relates to 'Families and children' I will talk you through the structure of how these—

Mr Pratt: I will just make sure that everyone actually has the one we are about to drill into. It is the very first one.

CHAIR: It is the Families and Communities Programme, 'Families and children'—in blue.

Ms Woolley: That is the one. You will see at the top of the page that it sets out the amount of funding that is published in the 2014-15 portfolio budget statements for this activity for 2013-14. It should be noted that this figure, the figure that is published in the PBS is estimated expenditure for the financial year, which is then reconciled against the actual expenditure which is reported in the DSS annual report.

Ms Bennett: That is because—as you know—the PBS is assembled in an earlier time so that the figures that come from the department are the best estimates at the time when it is provided for the PBS; 30 June is still a little while away.

CHAIR: And you will have another reconciliation?

Ms Bennett: Yes.

Ms Woolley: For this year there are also further impacts on the composition of these figures due to significant machinery of government changes, meaning that there are still some anomalies, where not all activities have been neatly transferred to new agencies. You will see some annotations in respect of that. Impacts from the change to the DSS PBS structure and the broadbanded program structure mean that, again, some bits and pieces of activities might not have found their permanent homes. But you will see where those are annotated.

That said, for the purposes of the committee's request to see the flow of appropriation across the forward estimates and the interaction with the new selections rounds for 2013-14, this funding is a good baseline for you to see how these figures align. The table below the 2013-14 figure represents the ons and offs that help to explain the variation between the 2013-14 figure and the 2014-15 figure published below this for the activity. That is the set of factors, including things like new funding, terminating sub-activities or initiatives, or other reasons that explain a change in expenditure.

The sub-total figure at the bottom of the set of ons and offs will show you the degree of variance between the two years. It should be noted that any variance between financial years could be due to multiple factors, some of which I have gone through, but include things like ongoing program costs; the construction of the original measure, which could be a very long historical thing; terminating measures; prior or current machinery of government changes; efficiency dividends; and other restructures of outcomes and programs.

Below the 2014-15 figure is the profile for expenditure in this activity over the forward estimates, which is consistent with what is in the PBS. Below that is the list of new selection processes, which will be undertaken in this activity this calendar year, the type of selection process—either open, direct or restricted—and the 'up to' amount of funding that would be available for that selection.

Senator SIEWERT: Sorry, could you say that again.

Ms Woolley: The list is of new selection processes—which is down the bottom—that will be undertaken this calendar year; the type of selection, either open, direct or restricted; and the 'up to' amount of funding that would be available for the selection.

Senator SIEWERT: I see.

Ms Woolley: The selections are being undertaken under the new broadbanded program structure, with the activity and sub-activity names representing the sorts of services and initiatives that would be funded. As explained at the previous estimates hearing, there is a strong alignment between the former funded activities and programs and the new activities. The honeycomb helps to explain the line-up of those.

It is possible to see many of the same sorts of services and activities in this new structure, and through information sessions and around 300 questions and answers on the DSS website, the changes continue to be explained to new and existing providers as they come to terms with the transition of these arrangements under the new structure.

In the packs provided to the committee earlier today—all that information is also available on the DSS website—you will have received copies of the selection packs for the 26 selection rounds that opened today, totalling around \$800 billion worth of grant funding over the forward estimates. That is the total of all of those selections.

These selections comprise 15 open selection rounds and 10 direct selection rounds. This is represented on the web site as four straight, direct selections and one selection which captures four sub-selections, which is because it is peak funding. It is, in effect, four mini selections, but it is depicted as one. That is why might figures will not add up if I do not explain that. There is one selection round that is open and direct, one that is direct and restricted, and a restricted selection round. If you go to the website and click on the particular selection it takes you straight through to the information about each of those selections.

The selection packs comprise program guidelines, which is the overarching framework for spending in this activity; a funding round summary, which is specific information to the applicant about who should apply and what funding is available; questions and answers for applicants to assist them to apply and determined their applicability for the round and whether it is worth providing an application.

In addition, the web site contains information to applicants to help them to apply through an application form, and gives them a copy of the new streamlined agreement which would be used for the funding round. Where we have identified that there are direct or restricted selections, those organisations have received an email today notifying them that they are invited to apply for those rounds.

You will see that there is an explanation also at the bottom of this table, in the smaller print down the bottom, which links back to the selections. It clarifies where there might be a variance between the total commitment for the activity over the forward estimates and the total of the selection process.

There is also an explanation of why for some activities only part of the appropriation for the activity relates to grants. Therefore, the selections and/or grants expenditure only represents a portion of the forward estimates figure. For example, in the case of settlement services, a significant proportion of the appropriation which you will see in the PBS is for procurement activities associated with humanitarian settlement services. That explains the differential between the amount that is open for selection and the total PBS amount. In some cases, part of the appropriation may already be committed for grants that are not due to cease until, say, 2015 or 2016. Therefore they are not available for selection processes at this time.

This has been outlined in the box below to assist in understanding the interactions with these figures. This format is consistent across the 14 A4s that we have provided, to try and give you a complete picture of the interactions between 2013-14 and 2014-15 funding and selection processes.

As explained at the previous estimates, the ultimate outcome of the selection processes—exactly who receives what funding in what configuration and for how much—is unknown until the selection process has been conducted.

Senator SIEWERT: Can we go through this worked example in a little more detail. You can probably appreciate I have been stuck in the chamber or in meetings basically since this folio was delivered, so I must admit I have not read the grant guidelines. Please bear that in mind if I ask a question and you say, 'It's in the folder.'

CHAIR: I am surprised you do not have it memorised by now.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes. Can we work through this first example of Families and Children? I am trying to track where the money is. In the first item, Families and Children, there are figures for 2013-14 and you have Find and Connect, for example. It says the reduction was always in the forward estimates. So that is an annotation to say, 'Don't forget that funding for this was decreasing anyway.' The figure you have here in this column, -0.240, is the money that was allocated to it?

Ms Bennett: No, that is the reduction that was to occur between 2013-14 and 2014-15. If there had been no change, it was going to be reduced by that amount in this budget. So last year's PBS forecast that reduction in 2014-15, 2015-16 and so on.

Senator SIEWERT: That is how I thought I was to interpret that. So what does the next figure mean when it says '+7.994'? That is how much was allocated under the previous process—correct?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Stronger Futures in the NT was projected to increase by 7.994 between 2013-14 and 2014-15 under the way the costings for that measure were constructed, just as the funding for Find and Connect was projected to decrease. So it is not the funding; it is the ons and offs, the pluses and minuses.

Senator SIEWERT: Point taken.

Ms Bennett: That line also explains an impact that does flow on to our PBS. It was the forecast but it has been transferred to PM&C.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, I understand that. That is basically what was set to gain or lose under the previous projections of the budget?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Correct.

Senator SIEWERT: Then we move down to the 2014-15 PBS appropriations and the subactivities under that. Your subtotal for the increase overall is still going to be difficult to reconcile, isn't it, because some of this has gone out of PM&C? But you have \$240.424 million, and the bottom line under the 2014-15 year is \$212.217 million.

Ms Bennett: As was explained by Ms Woolley, it is not every element. There could be a contract in place. It is not inclusive in that tiny print—that they are not going out for a selection because there are contracts that currently exist going over the years, but they still come out of the budget measure. They have to be appropriated. That is an explanation about why there is a gap between what is \$240 million and what is \$212 million to go out for selection.

Ms Hefren-Webb: The \$865.87 million over the forward estimates—can you see that line, where over four years of funding it adds to \$865 million?

CHAIR: The box under 'Families and Children'.

Ms Hefren-Webb: That is comprised of a number of factors. It is comprised of the \$212.217 million—that is going out for selection today. The \$458.066 million has gone out already as five-year contracts.

Senator SIEWERT: Sorry—

Ms Hefren-Webb: In the footnote, the \$458 million. That is the five-year agreements—

Senator SIEWERT: That we talked about last time.

Ms Hefren-Webb: Correct. There is also the \$25.21 million, which we have contracted for royal commission. There are contracts for Reconnect and \$75 million for six-months extension. Essentially, all those numbers should add up to the \$865 million.

Senator SIEWERT: Out of that is the \$212 million?

Ms Hefren-Webb: That is what is opening for selection today. So, for people bidding today, that is the maximum amount available.

Mr Pratt: The \$212.217 million is the maximum amount that is subject to the selection rounds which will apply in this process. It is a subtotal of the \$865.87 million.

Senator SIEWERT: What I am still try to do is track money that was spent here previously under all those grants to the money that is now being spent. Part of that I still cannot do, if I understand this correctly, because we do not know how much—yes, we do. When you were saying there are grants that have already been let, is all that included in this?

Ms Bennett: It is listed in the four dot points. What was explained was that, if you add the five-year agreements, the royal commission, Reconnect and the six-month extensions that are in place now for everyone who got an extension, and you add the forward of the \$212 million, that will equal \$865.870 million over the same period.

Mr Pratt: Just on that maths, roughly, it does work.

Senator SIEWERT: I am now trying to map the funding for the programs—family and relationship services—

Ms Hefren-Webb: Family and relationship services is family law services and the family and relationship services that have already gone out for the five-year agreement.

Senator SIEWERT: They have all been refunded?

Ms Hefren-Webb: They has been refunded for five years, and then there is the stronger relationships trial, which is the new trial, which is \$20 million, will be a direct restricted selection process.

Senator SIEWERT: That is for providers who are providing that service?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Who are already providing family and relationship services or similar services.

Ms Bennett: That is why it is restricted, because they need registration and professional skills. It is not that everybody could provide that or can apply for that or should apply for that.

Senator SIEWERT: We already know that they are providers who meet the qualifications. Then we go down to 'children and parenting'.

Ms Hefren-Webb: Children and parenting, as you can see, has three elements. It has one element called 'children and parenting support'. The program guidelines set it out in detail but it seeks to fund activities like playgroups, parenting classes, parenting resources—those types of early intervention, early childhood activities, which we have probably funded in the past under the label 'communities for children direct' and also under a number of other funding—

Senator SIEWERT: When you say 'probably', that is actually where I want to get to. Where you are funding particular activities, investing in children, for example, those sorts of services, how do I compare apples and apples? I know that we are comparing different things now, but what I am trying to find out through this process is where the emphasis is not being placed or where the money may have been lost out of children services to something else, or there has been a cut.

Ms Bennett: If you ask about something, we can tell you where it sits. But the idea of 'lost funding' is a concept that you cannot do anymore because you have brought them in—

Senator SIEWERT: That is my problem.

Ms Bennett: The goals and aims of that program have been broadbanded. So, in some sense, those old names have ceased and joined into a new name, with a collection of other activities that share in common the program aims; they have been brought in to a new program.

Senator SIEWERT: I understand that, but I am still trying to track it down. Let us go back to basics in terms of the amount of money that came out of discretionary grants.

Ms Bennett: That budget measure was set out; it was \$240 million over four years.

Senator SIEWERT: That is what I thought.

Ms Bennett: And it was across all the programs that the department administers.

Senator SIEWERT: Which are these?

Ms Bennett: They are reflected in every line that shows you the proportion of that money. If you go to almost halfway down the first box, it says 'discretionary grant program reform measure'. The impact of that budget measure on this cluster of activities between 2013-14 is set out in every one of the A4s.

Senator SIEWERT: I do not want to leave this permanently, but I just want the example of 'financial wellbeing and capability'. Is that where that comes in? Is that correct—\$9.7191.

Ms Bennett: Yes.

Senator SIEWERT: You cannot tell me which specific programs it might have come out of; but, out of 'families and children', that is how much which came out of it.

Ms Bennett: For this 2014-15?

Senator SIEWERT: For this financial year.

Ms Bennett: Yes.

Senator SIEWERT: Is it possible to get it, therefore, for the out years in each of the programs?

Ms Hefren-Webb: It is depicted in the PBS by outcomes but not by activity.

Senator SIEWERT: That is what we are all trying to find out. Does that make sense?

Mr Pratt: Yes and no. I guess the conceptual issue is that what happened with all of these subprograms from 2013-14 subject to the ons and offs. Then all the money goes into a big bucket, which is then described by the second half of the table, which shows what is going out for a selection process, what is getting covered through that. So we do not actually know yet where the money will be allocated or is already locked up in the things which are in the dot points down the bottom. Once it has gone into the bucket then it does not really apply in the future, it applies to the bucket. Does that make sense?

Senator SIEWERT: It does not apply?

Mr Pratt: It will not translate to the new activity.

Senator SIEWERT: My brain must be must be working a bit slowly tonight. I do not follow that. I do not see why you cannot tell me in terms of what you actually do. Wait, I do see why.

Ms Bennett: It lists by those outcomes. They come to family and communities which show the effect each year of that measure. At page 36, outcome 2 is families and community program, which we are looking at. The top of page 36 is discretionary grant program reform. It is the measure that was the \$250 million savings over four years. Outcome 2 is families and community program, and it sets out what the effect is each financial year.

Mr Pratt: The point I am making is that money has come from a high-level bucket and cannot be attributed against activities which will be subject to the selection processes now underway. They do not translate into 'is there a saving against intensive family support services or find and connect support services'. It comes off the top.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, they are entirely different. The problem then is trying to map where the emphasis is, where the programs were funded and what the emphasis is now in terms of those funds. What you are saying is, because you have broadbanded them you do not know, because you do not know what applications you are going to get.

Mr Pratt: Yes.

Senator SIEWERT: Right, it has finally sunk in.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Can I just add, Senator Siewert, the \$240 million reduction over four years will be against a total budget of \$20 billion, so we are talking about \$240 million of \$20 billion.

Senator SIEWERT: But, it is not \$20 billion that goes out to the community.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: No, but we want it in the context.

Senator SIEWERT: That is what I am interested in knowing now. I am looking at the services that are delivered by the community, on-the-ground services by the community, and where the \$240 million has come out of. Bear with me a little bit, because these figures are different from the figures that I have just seen in terms of outcome 2.

Ms Hefren-Webb: Outcome 2 is made up of six or seven different activities now. If you added up the discretionary grant program—

Senator SIEWERT: I am going to get the 26 that as outlined here, is that correct?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Correct.

Senator SIEWERT: I would like to go through each of the new programs and ask the reasoning around the restricted or the open access. As we go through that is going to be the easiest way of doing it. I will do that and then I will come back to the discretionary grant process and see if I can find out a little more information. We have already done the stronger relationship, we have done the children and parenting support, which is open.

Ms Hefren-Webb: That is correct, yes. Did you want an explanation? Essentially, as you know, playgroups are provided by a really wide range of organisations, so we felt it was useful to make it open for a whole range to apply to provide that type of service.

Senator SIEWERT: Was that the case before?

Ms Hefren-Webb: The types of services funded were under a range of different arrangements. We had, as I said, communities for children direct services. Some of those arrangements had been going for many years without having a particular selection process in place. We have previously funded Playgroups Australia as peak, and then playgroup associations in each state and territory. Those arrangements have gone on for a while. I guess there was a real mix of arrangements. We are now seeking to have really solid and good national coverage of those types of early intervention parenting services. Some organisations will be familiar with applying through an open process in the past and some may not. That is as precise as I can be.

Senator SIEWERT: But now everyone is in the pot.

Ms Hefren-Webb: Correct.

Senator SIEWERT: Is the intensive family support services restricted?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Yes, that is restricted because we aim to provide those through the stronger futures in the NT communities for children services, which are run by PM&C. Rather than fund a different service in a small community, we are trying to line up with the services they are funding under their Stronger Communities for Children program. So the intensive family support service would nestle into that service and provide an integrated service for families.

Senator SIEWERT: Is that like what you have previously done with some of the place based issues?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Yes. Where we know we have one service provider in a small town who has a really good track record and footprint and support from the community, we sometimes make the decision that the best thing will be to fund another activity within that one service.

Senator SIEWERT: Child support advocacy is direct?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Yes. There is a small number of groups that have been providing that for a while.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes. I presume that is reason for that. Forced adoption, support services are all the new processes.

Ms Hefren-Webb: Correct. As you know, it is kind of new territory, so we are going to an open process.

Senator SIEWERT: And find and connect is still going to be direct?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Yes, because we have to establish service providers that we are inviting to re-tender.

Senator SIEWERT: In terms of the discretionary grant programs and the reform measures, I am still trying to work out, for this particular area of families and children, where that money has come out of now it has come down to the three bands. Where does that money come out of? How are you making those decisions about where that money comes from? It has come out of the collected activities, and I understand that it has now been broadband and collapsed. What area does that money come out of, or are you applying it across the board? Is more money coming out of family and relationship services, children and parenting, and were specialist adult services allocated an amount of money? I am trying to find out which programs. Obviously that money has to come out of somewhere.

Ms Bennett: As we explained, Senator, those programs in fact do not exist in that sense any more.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, I know.

Ms Bennett: So it is not possible to take what in the past were subcomponents anyway. They were sort of brands or elements that people applied for or were given, and they were clustered into something. They have been redefined, they have looked at what the priorities are. They have taken into account the experience and the feedback that we have received from providers about what roles and services need to be delivered that sit together well. And obviously we draw on reprioritising past expenditure forecasted—what has always been in the budget at the high-level program level. We have to deliver certain activities at that program level. The paper that you have explains that, if you add up all the blues that equal the family and children's program, we have broken the measures down so that you can see the savings in what is families and communities.

Senator SIEWERT: So basically that \$7½ million comes from all of the families and communities?

Ms Bennett: It comes from a range of adjustments across various old elements that do not exist, that are focused into the new descriptors and programs that we are going out for.

Senator SIEWERT: So it is specifically really for the family and relationship services and children and parenting?

Ms Bennett: On page 36 are the high-level outcomes that we report on. In this particular area, families and communities, on page 98, are the components that link to our performance in the organisation and the measures set out in the KPIs. I understand that people will want to think: 'I used to get something called X that used to be a bit of something called Y in the 14,500 grants that we had across the department.' This is a redesign looking at those elements that were delivered and placing them in a new model. The components that we are able to tell you about, where the measure of the \$240 million relates to that high level—when we go back to page 36, where it says for outcome 2 the savings of the \$240 million for this year for families and communities are \$26.058 million, it is made up of these combined pages added together.

Senator SIEWERT: So what this does is breakdown across the components of families and communities the elements—so there is \$7½ million coming out of families and children and there is \$9.7 million coming out of financial wellbeing and capability.

Ms Bennett: The first six in your pile will add up to \$26.058 million.

Senator SIEWERT: That helps in the fact that it breaks it down across the outcomes. But we cannot chase it beyond there because it is entirely new programs—is that what you are saying?

Ms Bennett: Because it is a redesigning of old arrangements.

Mr Pratt: I made the point at the last estimates that the services or interventions that were able to be done under the past program structure are still able to be done subject to the selection processes under the new one.

Senator SIEWERT: I understand what you are saying.

Ms Bennett: The other point that Mr Pratt made was that these are indicative buckets depending on the organisations that apply. An organisation may actually wish to do several components. Within this program, they may want to do elements of the subactivity and the component in the selection round. It allows them to look at it more holistically, to seek those things that they have experience, strengths and capability in and be able to bid for that. The provision of information in funding that is available is obviously there to match the money that is allocated to the department through the budget process, but it is also to give an indication to the sector about the funds that are available rather than seeking an enormous amount of money that we are not budgeted for.

Senator SIEWERT: I take your point. I am going to have one more go at this for the out years—you can't, can you? Yes, you can. I understand the out years now, so for the next out year for activity 2, \$42.190 million comes out in the discretionary grant process—out of families and communities—that is correct, isn't it?

Ms Bennett: Yes.

Senator SIEWERT: Can you tell me therefore again what it is for the families and children activity? Does that make sense? It is clear in my head what I am asking.

Mr Pratt: What you are asking is: is there an equivalent to the \$7.467 million?

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, and that is what I was trying to ask before but I obviously did not ask it the right way.

Ms Bennett: This year, for families and children, it is \$7.467 million. Next year it will be \$16.564 million.

Senator SIEWERT: Can you tell me where I find that or is that not being continued?

Ms Bennett: No, it is not—

Senator SIEWERT: That is what I am trying to understand.

Ms Bennett: We could take that on notice and provide you what the saves are for families and children over the estimates that make up the \$42—

Senator SIEWERT: Can we do that in all areas where the discretionary grants reform measure applies?

Ms Bennett: Yes.

Senator SIEWERT: Because it obviously applies in some and not others.

Ms Bennett: As we said, the program families and communities is one of the six elements, and we can show that. It is an indicative spread.

Senator SIEWERT: I get that but, if you can give that for each of those areas where that process kicks in for each of the activities in the outcomes, that would be appreciated.

Ms Bennett: We will take that on notice.

Senator SIEWERT: I apologise if it was because of me that we took so long to get to that. I suppose I should just flag, Chair, that as I said, even with my office looking at it, we haven't had a long time to go through each of the program outlines and selection criteria, particularly the program outlines. We will have some questions to follow up, potentially—it may all be perfect. But I am not going to go into those now, because I haven't had a chance to read them. Senator Moore, what we have just done is spend quite a lot of time going through the first one, so we can get it into our heads.

Senator MOORE: Which is families and communities.

Senator SIEWERT: We have just done families and children. Before I move on, is there anything that you wanted to cover specifically about programs there? Is that the best way to do it, Chair, before we move on?

CHAIR: I am happy for you to do that. This material has only been publicly available since around lunchtime, so it is quite reasonable that people haven't had the chance to go through it. I would have thought you might want to concentrate on a few areas that were of interest.

Senator SIEWERT: I have one question before I move on. In terms of the five-year grants that are given in communities for children, which elements of that were given the five-year funding?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Communities for Children Facilitating Partners.

Senator SIEWERT: That is the only one?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Correct.

Senator SIEWERT: Thank you—I just needed to clarify that.

Senator MOORE: I have got a general question—and in the yellow pack it may have been fixed up. When we got the full set and I had been poring over the website before that, which was no good for my health at all, I

began to print things off. The sections with the figures in it was attachment A on the website but not in our packs when we first got them. Is there any reason for that? In the packs, say, in section—

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Are you talking about what we have got in the yellow packs, Senator?

Senator MOORE: Maybe the yellow pack has picked up on that. The graphs of figures that showed funding across states and—

Ms Bennett: The yellow packs will—

Senator MOORE: Was there any reason they were not given out?

Ms Bennett: A lot of effort was put in to get this up last night and staff were printing them out this morning to get them to you. I do not think there is a reason—if something is missing that we did not provide—

Senator MOORE: It was just where there were attachments with figures on them that were not in the packs.

Ms Bennett: We thought they were.

Senator MOORE: In the yellow pack we got at the beginning—and I think they could be the same documents, but on the website they were attachment A. We will not go over it, but we had to print it off and include it. It was the list of tables. It came with the big map. I had particular interest in the emergency relief area. In the emergency relief area, when you read the documents on the website there is an attachment A that puts out all the figures across the states, and that was not in the pack.

Ms Bennett: We did not print every aspect of the website because there were instructions on how to apply. We were trying to pick for you the things in the time we had. I must say that we thought we had provided that.

Senator MOORE: I just wanted to ask. That is fine. My understanding is that you have gone through the problems of trying to link in emergency relief what was in last financial year with now. I believe that has already been followed. We have had this discussion—and I pulled out the reference from our last hearing and I know there were valiant efforts to explain it to me—but, in terms of the process, I am still not absolutely clear with the documents you handed out, the A4 sheet, which was the activity type and funding, the financial wellbeing and capability, and how it worked. I am still not crystal clear on how it is working, particularly when you have to add in the significant budget allocation—

Ms Bennett: Perhaps we can talk you through that. If you go to the yellow envelope we have just given you—

Senator MOORE: I know I have the yellow envelope. I just cannot put my hands on it.

Ms Bennett: We have some spares.

Senator MOORE: You did give it to me. I do not need more paper.

Ms Bennett: The third of the A4s is titled 'Families and communities program financial wellbeing and capability'.

Senator MOORE: I have got it. Fantastic.

Ms Bennett: Would you like to explain again how to read it, Trish? You were not here, but there is an important way of how to read the information we have provided. If we can just recap.

Senator MOORE: Good luck, Ms Woolley.

Ms Woolley: So what I explained before was really the operation of the top line, which is the 2013-14 figure for financial wellbeing and capability.

Senator MOORE: Which was last year?

Ms Woolley: Yes, that is right. What sits below is what we call ons and offs, so the sorts of things that would then impact on the differential between the 2013-14 figure and the 2014-15 figure, which is sitting down in the next blue box. That tries to explain with pluses and minuses where there are impacts on the differences between those years. As you drop below that, there are the forward estimates. Importantly, the four-year total, which in this case is \$579.389—

Senator MOORE: Which cleverly has an asterisk beside it.

Ms Woolley: It does, so it has a few explanations. It in some way draws reference to the total figure at the bottom of the selection rounds. So it tries to align for you some sense of how the up-and-coming selections—and those figures are four-year figures as well—align with the expenditure in the program so you can see how it is mapped and then with a range of qualifiers below that detail where the money might already be committed for something that detracts from it being available in the selection process.

Senator MOORE: So the top is what we had in last year's budget papers—everything that now comes under financial wellbeing and capability. So: budget brought forward exercise, 2012-13 plus 10—what is that?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Can I just go back a step? The list of line items there is not everything that was in the program last year. What it is is a list of ons and offs between this year and next year. So it is things that are changing. So the budget brought forward exercise was an early payment to a couple of organisations: Good Shepherd Microfinance and the Brotherhood of St Laurence—

Senator MOORE: They had a special program around loans, didn't they?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Yes. Good Shepherd Microfinance do the no-interest loans. So we made some early payments in 2013-14, which means that the funding kind of disappeared from 2013-14 and went to 2012-13. We have not done that this year, or we have not proposed to do that this year—

Ms Bennett: While it was money that had been allocated for the 2013-14 year, in terms of accounting treatment it was paid before 30 June, so it was taken off that year and moved to the year that it was expended in.

Senator MOORE: So you brought forward the allocation?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Correct.

Senator MOORE: It was already allocated 2013-14. Did they have a greater expenditure or something of that nature? It would seem to me that there has to be a decision process to do that.

Ms Hefren-Webb: There was a decision process of the former minister to bring forward payment of that and also some components of the Family Support Program.

Senator MOORE: Does that particular program still exist?

Ms Hefren-Webb: The No Interest Loan Scheme still exists; the Saver Plus program still exists. Funding for Foodbank is under the new food-relief component, which is, as you can see down the bottom, part of the open selection process going forward.

Senator MOORE: Can you just go backwards for me on that? So that 10,000 is including some of the payments in those other things you have just mentioned as well; it was not just their loans component?

Ms Hefren-Webb: No.

Senator MOORE: Can we get a list of what those things were?

Ms Hefren-Webb: What the early payments were?

Senator MOORE: Yes, please. It would be very useful. At this stage, I just want to know what schemes there were and what the actual funding is and what has happened to it.

Ms Bennett: That was a conversation that we will try and recap. What we have explained is that there were many activities under a whole array of grants that have now been broadbanded. As the secretary explained, those activities are still covered under the new structure. The issue is that the old name or old way of describing something is not the new way—

Senator MOORE: But it was the old way—

Ms Bennett: But what you are looking for in the selections is the provision of the service or the outcome, and those services and outcomes that we were seeking are in the new selection—the new honeycombed framework.

Senator MOORE: I understand that, but, if we were delivering programs under these headings in 2012-13 and they are not terminating programs, there must be a way of tracing them through. I just do not understand why that would be so difficult.

Ms Bennett: Some of those elements that you have just discussed were not dedicated, clear programs, so they were not recorded in PBS and measure. Some of them were actually subactivities of subactivities—

Senator MOORE: I am cool with that. I would like to know what they are. When people were getting money to perform a subactivity of a subactivity, there was still government funding for that subactivity and an expectation from the community that the subactivity was happening.

Ms Bennett: But they were programs that you can track through PBSs and they are at the program in the outcome level. What we were explaining was that, if you go to page 36 of the PBS, you will see, at the top of the page, it is the \$240 million savings over four years that is referred to as the discretionary grant program reform measure. Outcome 2 has the combined effect over the out years of that saving measure. For this year it is 26,058. On each of these blue sheets that we have provided—there are six of them that make up that outcome 2, which is 'Families and community programs'—each of the six has an item if they are affected by that measure. For example, in 'Financial wellbeing and capability', the reduction between this component that comes out in 2014-15 is 9.791 for the 'Financial wellbeing and capability' activity.

Senator MOORE: Does 9.791 appear anywhere on the blue sheet?

Ms Bennett: Yes.

Senator MOORE: I see—'Discretionary grant program reform measure', saving of 9.791.

Ms Bennett: And every one of the six blue sheets that relates to the family and community programs and their elements that has a contribution to that measure is set out in that way. For Senator Siewert we have agreed to take on notice that, against those six elements, we will show how the reduction is occurring in 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, the forward years.

Senator MOORE: I am listening to the theory and I am certainly hearing the words, but can you give me an example of what you referred to as a subprogram of a subprogram?

Ms Hefren-Webb: I could give you an example. The no interest loan scheme run by Good Shepherd that we just talked about was funded through a budget measure called 'Microfinance', which was—

Senator MOORE: So, under the heading 'Microfinance', a component was the no interest loans scheme?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Yes. That was in the old PBS. Microfinance was a subactivity itself of the financial management program. So that was a component of an activity of a program, if you will. Essentially the saving that Ms Bennett has talked about, the 9.791, applies at what we would call the activity level. You take all the different activities that are 'Financial wellbeing and capability', which are depicted on the website in the famous honeycomb—being emergency financial relief; food relief; Commonwealth financial counselling; financial capability services; financial resilience services, which include the microfinance things; and some sector support—and those activities have all been bundled up and then the saving of 9.791 comes from those, before we have allocated funds for the new streams going forward.

Ms Bennett: The other point that we made is that it is a bundled-up selection process, so to decide what was a sub-sub-sub activity, as you were asking about—we do not actually know what the spend will be, because it is part of a larger bucket in this new design, and it will be up to providers to look at the selection criteria for the services and outcomes that we are seeking and for them to look at opportunities to either join up or to bid for elements of those arrangements.

Senator MOORE: Within the yellow folders, the figures, I am looking at 'Emergency relief attachment A', which went with all the information that came there, and it says that they are giving by state and by region. What does SA4 mean?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Statistical area level 4.

Senator MOORE: Right—it is not some kind of army unit! It is all public, so I will just go to Darling Downs-Maranoa. It says that there is \$196,102 in 2015 under 'financial crisis/material aid'. If I were a provider in that region, that tells me that the absolute total that is going into that area is \$196,102—is that right?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Yes, that is the maximum available

Senator MOORE: So how will I know how much to bid for?

Ms Hefren-Webb: That really is a decision for the provider to think about—what part of that area they think they are capable of supporting and servicing.

Senator MOORE: Is there historical data that tells them how much was in each area before then?

Ms Hefren-Webb: There is a fair bit of historical data about the program and about how the funding has been allocated previously. Certainly, providers would have access to statistical reports and things like that, if they are an existing emergency relief provider. There is information on the net.

Obviously, patterns of demand have changed and patterns of socioeconomic disadvantage have changed. An area might be getting more or less than it has previously, depending on our analysis of potential level of need in particular areas.

Senator MOORE: So how is the figure \$196,102 developed?

Ms Hefren-Webb: My staff took the total amount of funding available in the financial wellbeing and capability activity and we did some advice to the minister about how much we thought should be allocated for emergency relief as compared with financial counselling, microfinance activities and other sector support activities. The minister made some decisions about that. Once we had a decision about the notional amount for emergency relief we worked pretty closely with our mapping people on what the most appropriate statistical area was to use. In the past, I think we have used some Centrelink data, and we used some of that as well.

I can probably provide on notice more detail about this, because I have to confess that this is not my area of expertise—

Senator MOORE: Oh, I just chose that one because it happened to be there. It is just that—

Ms Hefren-Webb: We would have consulted with our state offices as well, which have been involved in working with emergency relief providers over many years. We came up with an agreed mapping of the funding to what we think is a reasonable analysis of likely need in those different areas.

Now, we might get three organisations that say, 'We'd like to deliver in that area,' and they might each say, 'We'd only like to deliver a maximum of \$50,000 this year.' It is not necessarily the case that \$196,000 has to go out the door. That is a notional, an up-to, amount, to give them some guidance.

Senator MOORE: What if they say they want to do \$196,000?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Obviously, if one organisation wants to do that, and we received five applications, that is what the selection process will involve—assessing the different providers, making some decisions about what the best mix is.

Senator MOORE: But it is the parameters. From what I have read in this document, they have the global figure for their region.

Ms Bennett: Yes, they do have that. But as we explained, it is best practice that is actually set out for other grants and it is applied by the Department of Finance. You have to give an indicative indication so that organisations, firstly, have an indication and, secondly, can shape their application with the best information that is available.

Senator MOORE: Absolutely. Has the quantum being affected? I know we had this discussion at the last two estimates.

Ms Bennett: At the last estimates we did talk quite a bit about emergency relief.

Senator MOORE: Yes, you did.

Ms Bennett: We explained that there had been a reduction in emergency relief and that it reflected a reduced—look, we did not bring that expertise here but I did actually answer that at the time.

Senator MOORE: Yes.

Ms Bennett: I talked about pre-global financial crisis, that the numbers for access had dropped and that changes had been made. I think that was quite detailed—

Senator MOORE: Yes, you did. But I just needed to refresh my memory.

Ms Bennett: As the secretary explained, we brought people—

Senator MOORE: I understand. But we are in the realm of my questions and I was refreshing my mind.

Senator SIEWERT: Can I just pick up on that. I have just heard what you said about not necessarily having the right paperwork—

Ms Hefren-Webb: We are happy to take those questions on notice.

Senator SIEWERT: I have been doing some checking at home in Western Australia. You only have to go to the WACOSS report for 2012, which are the latest figures, to show that demand has actually gone up. The organisations that I have spoken to that are reporting data—and I know it is hard—have said that the number of the queues are going up, that demand has gone up and that, in 2012, they had turned away 20,000 requests. What I am getting on the ground is very different from what you said at estimates. I want to know—

Mr Pratt: Senator, they both might be right. I do not know, but they both may be right.

Senator SIEWERT: That is what I am getting to. I want to compare what is happening with some of the organisations and how the data is being collected, because it has been suggested to me by some of the service providers that maybe some of the turnaways are not being documented or that you collect data differently to the way that some of the service providers do. It may be that the data you have is coming from organisations that you fund and some of the data I am getting is not—WACOSS's reporting does not necessarily come from all the organisations that you fund.

Ms Bennett: We also provided a national report. We did not go down to that information, but if you could provide it to us—it is really hard to sit here and say anything when you have spoken to someone and they have provided that and we had something else.

Senator SIEWERT: I understand that. The figures that I am using are actually the WACOSS figures that were published.

Ms Bennett: If you can provide that to us, we will have a look at our information and our data to see if there is a difference.

Senator SIEWERT: What I would like to know—and I cannot remember if this is the one I put on notice; I will have to go back and have a look—is how your data is collected and what it records. I am presuming that it is just from the organisations that you fund.

Ms Hefren-Webb: It is just from the organisations we fund, and the data is provided by the organisations. I can provide you on notice with more detail about exactly what questions we ask and what they provide.

Senator SIEWERT: That would be really appreciated, if you could. I understand what you are saying, Mr Pratt. We could be again comparing apples and oranges.

Ms Bennett: And they may not be funded for everything that they provide. It is their organisational perspective of what is happening.

Senator SIEWERT: Exactly. In terms of when you went to the minister and said, 'Show me the detail', was there consideration of maybe consulting organisations to see if their needs had changed and if needs of emergency relief providers are being met by the funding?

Ms Bennett: These are budget decisions.

Senator SIEWERT: I am not asking for the advice that you gave. I am asking for the parameters in terms of—

Ms Bennett: We will have to take that on notice.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Can we put today's estimates in context? Last time, Senator Cameron made some very unfortunate assertions and allegations. I have dealt with those in terms of an opening statement and we have provided you with a lot of information. I am concerned that some of the questioning that we are going through at the moment may well be a part of the material that has been provided to you, and some of the information that you are all still asking in terms of information on notice may well have been provided in this volume of information that the department has provided. We have been happy to assist, but today we have come along with all these thousands of pages of information because Senator Cameron made some very unfortunate assertions about conspiracy and cover up.

Senator SIEWERT: Senator Fierravanti-Wells, I was the one that proposed this, because we were not able to get the information that we need in terms of the very stuff that you have very helpfully provided. We can actually now see where this funding has been allocated and where the discretionary grants under the activities are coming from. It was not, in fact, just because Senator Cameron was making those assertions.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Can I say, Senator Siewert, that not only have we provided you with material that has been made available publicly, but the officials, given the very limited time available to them, have also prepared additional material, which has been very useful in terms of assisting the process. The point that I am making, Senator Siewert, is that, at this point in time, perhaps you may benefit, and other senators may benefit, from a detailed reading of this material. Rather than pursuing matters, which I have no doubt appear to have been covered in the material that has been given—

Senator SIEWERT: I do not think the questions I was asking just then are covered, and the officials—

CHAIR: Could we have just one at a time, please?

Senator SIEWERT: The officials are perfectly entitled to say, 'Senator Siewert, go and read the documents.'

Senator MOORE: That we got at lunchtime today.

Senator SIEWERT: That we got at lunchtime today. I actually got them during question time. I am not having a go about that, but you cannot expect me or my staff to have been through every one of these documents. I really appreciate this breakdown in particular. It is really useful. This goes directly to the issue of emergency relief and the funding and the change in the programs, which is what we were trying to pursue during estimates two weeks ago.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Senator Siewert, the officials have explained to you what the process is. They explained it then; they have explained it a number of times this afternoon. They have explained to you what has happened in this process. They have provided as much information as possible. Ms Bennett, Ms Woolley and Ms Hefren-Webb have assisted more in this process. Senator Siewert, I appreciate that you may not be happy about the process, but that is the process and the officials have explained the process to you. I have explained the background as to why we are here. I have also said that, yes, there was \$240 million in terms of grant funding over four years and those reductions, and they have been explained to you, but they are against the background of \$20 billion worth of grant funding over the forward estimates. We have certainly assisted as far as we can at this point in time. We took commitments to the last federal election in relation to reducing red tape, simplifying the contracts, providing longer term contracts, and basically to ease the burden on these organisations. That is what

we are seeking to do. I appreciate that you may not agree with our commitments, and that is an issue for you and the Labor Party, but the officials—

Senator SIEWERT: I was not even asking that. You are trying to make this into a bun fight. We were perfectly civil, asking questions and trying to discover how decisions were made and what has been allocated where. You have now jumped in and you are trying to stop us asking questions. If that is the way you want to do it, let's do it that way.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: No, you do not agree with some of the decisions that we have made.

Senator SIEWERT: I was not even asking that. You are making assumptions about what I was asking.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Senator Siewert, it certainly seemed like that is what you are asking.

Senator SIEWERT: Maybe you were not listening when I started and were not following and just—

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Maybe you were not listening, Senator Siewert, to what I said right at the beginning as to the background as to why we—

Senator SIEWERT: Your version of the background and why we are here.

CHAIR: Senator Siewert and Senator Fierravanti-Wells. Senator Moore, did you have some questions?

Senator MOORE: I do, but I also want to have a short response to what we have just heard. It is certainly our understanding that Senate estimates are determined for senators to ask questions, questions they want to ask, to the department and the representing minister. That is what we do. As a result of the last Senate estimates hearing, there were details of funding. I am not going into any discussion about the interchange that happened at the time, but if you go through the *Hansard* record you will see that the reason we have come out today is that there were details of funding allocations that we felt we needed to question, and they were not available to us at Senate estimates. That is why the committee recalled Senate estimates. I think that the time belongs to the senators to ask the questions they feel they need to ask. The department can answer them in the way they choose, but the department has been very helpful. We are just trying to work through it because I still am a little unclear on exactly how the transitions happened and how I find out exactly which money is going to which program and where. I believe, if you check it out, that is the reason we have Senate estimates. Senator Fierravanti-Wells, I totally understand the need to put it in context. You have done that—

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: I am also conscious that Ms Bennett has this afternoon already twice explained the process. We might ask Ms Bennett to explain the process a third time.

CHAIR: Senator Fierravanti-Wells, that clearly—

Senator MOORE: If I do not understand the process, I will ask a third time.

CHAIR: I think, Senator Fierravanti-Wells, that if senators have further questions in this area, it is a complex change. It is not unreasonable for senators to ask for it to be re-explained.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: I think, Senator Boyce, we might ask Ms Bennett to explain the process for a third time.

Senator SIEWERT: No. I do not need it explained again.

Senator MOORE: I think we understand it now. We know what questions we want to ask.

Senator SIEWERT: I do not want to take up time having it explained again.

CHAIR: Perhaps we could start asking them then.

Senator SIEWERT: I was asking them.

Senator MOORE: You interrupted.

CHAIR: Recommence asking them, please, Senator Siewert.

Senator SIEWERT: I was trying to construct that last question by not asking for advice that you provided. What I am trying to ask is: in the light of the comment you made earlier about there being different ways that the relief is provided, was there consideration given to changing that or you have just kept it the same? I understand the issue around the way you have allocated the money differently.

Ms Bennett: We did not bring the experts in that area. What we will do is take that on notice. If you have got information from one of your organisations that you would like to provide to us, we can have a look at what has happened. It is about the design changes that we have made rather than what was taken into consideration.

Senator SIEWERT: I take that point and I understand that. If you could take it on notice, that would be great. Because so many changes were made, some of these programs we were unable to follow up previously. It has become more obvious when you have broadbanded them and where the allocations have been made.

Ms Bennett: It is complicated with some of these new elements. Some used to belong to a whole different area and, because of machinery of government changes, for example, once settlement services came to us, we found that we had another program that was in the families area where they were doing the same thing. They were being funded for the same purpose, so some of those areas identified opportunities for duplication of like and like.

Senator MOORE: Can you tell us which two they were—and you can do that on notice. There have been a number of statements made along those lines about the fact that you have found duplication. In none of the data that we have in any of the folders does it tell us which programs they were. So if we could get some information on where the duplications were—

Mr Pratt: I don't think that is ever going to be possible without difficulty. Going back to your original objective, we are trying to give as much of a translation between the old arrangements and the new arrangements as we can. Ultimately, I am not sure we are ever going to be able to directly correlate what money was spent under previous programs with new broadbanded programs in the future, simply because some of the savings and things like that have been taken off the top of the budget and then will be reallocated to new services which are yet to be determined through this selection process.

What we will be able to do in future estimates is show where all of the new budget for 2014-15 is being allocated against the new program types and what is going to be delivered under those new program types. There is never being to be a direct link between what was done under the previous arrangement and the new ones, simply because we had an awful lot of subprograms which have now been collapsed into a much smaller number of subprograms.

Senator MOORE: I am sorry, Mr Pratt, I just don't understand that; I genuinely don't understand that—

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Senator Moore, when you go from streamlining 18 discretionary grant programs into seven, there are some changes. Ms Bennett and Mr Pratt have sought to explain that to you. I am sorry that you do not understand that process but, as a consequence of that, there has been streamlining. We believe that, as a consequence of a new way of doing things, we will reduce red tape, there will be more innovation and there will be changes in efficiencies that will result in savings. That is the decision that we have made. What we have tried to explain to you today is how that process operates.

Senator MOORE: Ms Bennett has told me that you have found a specific program, which was my original question. You put on record that, when you brought multicultural programs into your sphere and you were recreating how you were going to streamline the programs into the new structure—I do understand the new structure—you identified a program that came from multicultural affairs that was doing exactly the same as one in FaHCSIA. Which one was that?

Ms Hefren-Webb: The Family Relationship Services for Humanitarian Entrants Program.

Senator MOORE: And that was being funded under which program?

Ms Hefren-Webb: It was part of the former Family Support Program.

Senator MOORE: Was that the family support program in FaHCSIA or in—

Ms Hefren-Webb: FaHCSIA.

Senator MOORE: What we have consistently heard is that there was duplication found when you were doing the streamlining process. That has been stated on a number of occasions. I am trying to find out where you have examples of that.

Ms Hefren-Webb: When settlement services joined the department, as Ms Bennett said, we met with our colleagues. They talked about the range of activities they fund under settlement services and it included support for people managing family relationship breakdown, relationships with their children. We said that we have been funding an activity that is relationship support for humanitarian entrants. We had a look at it and it was a very similar program. So, as part of broadbanding, they have been brought together.

Senator MOORE: I think that is an extremely reasonable thing to do, but what we want to find out is where you have identified those things, what they are, so that we can understand what the streamlining means. There has been consistent rhetoric about what the program engages. I have studied the Honeycomb document. I do know what the future structure is going to be. I still think it is a fair and reasonable request to find out what was being funded and how, and how that has been changed. Now I take the point, Mr Pratt, that we are never going to get a perfect correlation because of the complexities of funding, but I still think it is the first one—is that not right, Chair, and Senator Siewert?—where we have had a concrete example of a program that we have actually seen. That is what we were seeking to find. That is good. Have you found any others?

Ms Hefren-Webb: I think when you were not in the room I talked about playgroups. We found that we were funding playgroups under a whole range of different programs, and so we have again consolidated that under the 'children and parenting activities'.

Senator MOORE: Is there any way that we can get a list of your streamlining process—not explaining how the process works but where you have, through this work, already identified a program? Playgroups is a great example where that term was being bandied around. It is a great program in the way that it has enhanced society. Can we find out where playgroups are being funded under a number of different areas and how that translates? Is that something you can do?

Ms Bennett: I think I need to go back to the secretary's point, and that is that there were two examples that we gave about concrete duplication. But duplication can also be that there might have been elements and subelements of a certain activity or for a certain cohort where it was a like and a like. It is not possible to map the 14,000 grants that we had. What we looked at was the type of programs that we delivered, the subprograms, the subprogram activities and the subactivities. We bundled those together to have those services in a more 'like framework' so that we can see those elements that were across different programs that now make up the 'financial wellbeing and capability'.

Senator MOORE: I am still troubled—

Ms Bennett: It will not be possible to go through every measure and track back whether this, for that group, was a duplication by another organisation or a duplication for a service that might have been provided by another provider in a combination of other things. It was a more high-level examination of the nature and aims of programs and services that we provided, and the outcome was to avoid—

Senator Moore interjecting—

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Senator Moore, I have been in this committee for quite a number of years. If I had asked that question of the officials a number of years ago, I think it would probably have been ruled out and I would have been told, 'This is just not possible.' The officials have given you sufficient information. There are 14,000 grants. I think Ms Bennett and Mr Pratt have made it very, very clear that it is not possible in this instance. We have had a couple of anecdotal accounts because of the particular area that we were talking about, but at this point in time I think the officials have given you as much information as they can in relation to this matter. We can sit here all night, if you like, and talk about this.

ACTING CHAIR: We will not—we will sit here no later than 7.30. We seem to be at a bit of an impasse. The question has been asked now several times and the officials have been very clear about the level of detail they are able to provide. I am not sure that it is fruitful to keep pursuing the line of questioning. I am sure there are other lines of questioning that you are interested in drilling down on with some of the grants, and that is part of this process. If Senator Siewert or Senator Moore would like to start drilling down, I think it is pretty clear—

Senator MOORE: I thought we were drilling down.

Senator SIEWERT: With all due respect, we are drilling down and it is not up to you to decide what we can ask about.

ACTING CHAIR: I am not trying to decide what you will ask; I am saying we have had a very clear answer as to the level of detail several times.

Senator SIEWERT: I think there is a bit of a misunderstanding about what we are asking for. Can I attempt to clear that up?

ACTING CHAIR: Please do.

Senator SIEWERT: I have some more questions along these lines but from a slightly different perspective.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: I know exactly what you are asking. You are asking the officials to go through 14,000 grants—

Senator SIEWERT: No, that is where you are misunderstanding!

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Perhaps you might need to be a little clearer.

ACTING CHAIR: Order!

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: I think Mr Pratt has made it very clear that that is just not possible.

Senator SIEWERT: Acting Chair, if Senator Fierravanti-Wells is going to interrupt every time I try to ask a question, we are going to be here a long time.

ACTING CHAIR: Interruptions will happen from time to time and I will call Senator Fierravanti-Wells to order if I believe it is unreasonable, but I would also ask you not to yell. We will try and keep it as civil as we can. The senator is entitled to clarify answers, but—

Senator SIEWERT: She did not even let me get my question out.

ACTING CHAIR: Perhaps you can try again, and we will refrain from yelling. Please go back to the question.

Senator SIEWERT: I did not yell. I raised my voice to try and get across—

ACTING CHAIR: There is a record. I guess other people can judge whether my assessment is—

Senator SIEWERT: that we are frustrated that, when we are trying to ask questions, we are getting interrupted before we even get them out.

ACTING CHAIR: Why don't you try and ask the question again or rephrase it.

Senator SIEWERT: I was trying to clarify that we are not asking about the 14,000 individual grants. We want the areas where you found duplications. You gave us two examples and they are not grants.

Senator MOORE: They were the first examples we have had in 2½ days of questioning in this area. It is true; check the *Hansard*.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Can I just say, we took certain decisions. They were the decisions of this government. We are not shying away from the decisions that we made. We believe that those decisions were appropriate. What has happened here is that the officials in the department have implemented those decisions. You are trying to sit here and score political points, but the reality is—

Senator SIEWERT: No, we are not.

Senator MOORE: Acting Chair, this is inappropriate.

Senator SIEWERT: I am not; I am trying to find out what is going on.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: We have made certain decisions.

ACTING CHAIR: Senator Fierravanti-Wells is entitled to answer the question.

Senator MOORE: She is not answering the question.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: We made certain decisions. You are asking the officials to respond and outline decisions that were made by the government. We made certain decisions in relation to certain programs. You may not like that, but they are the decisions that we have made. So that is where we are at.

Senator SIEWERT: We are going to be here a long time.

Senator MOORE: Can I put on record that we have now heard that explanation from the minister. That is the background to it. That should be it as to that explanation.

ACTING CHAIR: Just as it was pointed out to me by Senator Siewert, correctly, that I cannot stop you from pursuing particular lines of questioning except in certain circumstances, I cannot direct the minister not to restate a point if she believes it is relevant. We are going to have a lot of back and forth here—I think that would be frustrating to all of us—but I invite Senator Siewert to continue with her questioning. You were saying that you were going to rephrase. If you would like to rephrase, please do. I am not going to interrupt the minister every time she says something that you do not like.

Senator SIEWERT: Unfortunately, I did not get the opportunity to explain.

Senator MOORE: No.

ACTING CHAIR: Well, try again.

Senator SIEWERT: You used the example of the family relationship and settlement services. Those are two clear programs—not grants; clear funding programs—where you identified that they were virtually the same. When you identified those two, they each had a pocket of funding; that is correct, isn't it? Each grant program had an allocation of funding.

Ms Bennett: They were not programs; they were just—

Senator SIEWERT: I am sorry if I am using the wrong terminology.

Ms Bennett: Yes. They were small activities.

Senator SIEWERT: Small activities, sorry, yes. When you identified those two, there was an allocation of funding, nominally, against each one in each program, each area? That would have been correct, wouldn't it? So, when you pool them together—and, as Senator Moore has pointed out, that is entirely reasonable—what

happened with the funding? Was it pooled? Or did you just take the funding of one or use the funding of one? Those funds were obviously being used for grants, for programs, to run particular activities that were funded by that allocation of funding, the pool of funding.

Ms Bennett: We have not booked the area experts.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Look—

Senator SIEWERT: Senator Fierravanti-Wells, I am genuinely trying to find out what is happening. I am not making a political point. I want to understand. So could you just let them tell me the answer, please?

Mr Pratt: Can I have a go at this?

Senator SIEWERT: I really do not see what is so difficult here.

Mr Pratt: I am not promising this will be helpful, and please stop me if I have covered this. I will try and do it waving my hands—I must have Italian in my background!

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: That is very good, Mr Pratt.

Mr Pratt: Under the old program structure, we had a vast range of programs. Some of them were grant programs. Some of them were ongoing funding sources for services and so forth. Under some of those, there were a range of activities which were funded, sometimes on an ongoing basis. Sometimes they were funded for a discrete period. There were never any sorts of ongoing buckets of money tied just to those activities. There was always flexibility to move money around within those programs. So, with our streamlining process—and this is where, if we go to the third sheet that we have been just recently looking at—

Senator MOORE: Sorry, which one? There are lots of third sheets.

Mr Pratt: Financial Wellbeing and Capability.

Senator SIEWERT: I have got that third sheet. Yes, okay.

Mr Pratt: When we totalled up all of those grants, activities and programs or services, it came to an estimated expenditure of 122.96 in 2013-14. Then we have set it out in this. We have explained the ons and offs between that year and 2014-15, and the subtotal down the bottom, 139.131, then transfers to the next line, which is the amount of money available for like services—but not necessarily identical—for the Financial Wellbeing and Capability program in 2014-15. So that is 139.131. We have explained that transfer. And, as I have explained several times, whatever we did under those previous grants, activities and services can still be done under the new program.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes.

Mr Pratt: You know that, yes?

Senator SIEWERT: Yes.

Mr Pratt: So then the next line sets out the 2014-15 appropriation and then the like appropriations for the next three financial years, and it comes up with a total over the forward estimates of the 579. We have gone through that. And then the next box shows the maximum amount that is subject to the selection rounds that started today, where we will purchase \$492.7 million worth of services over those four years through those notional break-ups under the new categories.

What we cannot do yet is anticipate what will be proposed to us and we will select and then fund. Once we have gone through that process and we have contracted organisations then we will be able to show, under the new structure, how that \$579 million over the four years is going to be allocated to different services, grants and the like. I suppose it would be possible, then, to try and match that against the previous arrangement but—

Senator SIEWERT: Are you saying that you can do that once you have the grants in?

Mr Pratt: Yes, once we have selected the providers and contractors.

Senator SIEWERT: I understand that—perhaps not perfectly well—fairly well. I do understand what you are saying. One of the examples that was made about savings, as we were discussing, was with respect to the example that was just used of the multicultural family services. What we are trying to find out is how that—I understand that the process has changed—

Mr Pratt: Sorry for interrupting. It is a potential source of savings, but we were identifying areas where we had multiple program types which provided similar sorts of things. What we have done is bang them all together.

Senator SIEWERT: So, what I am—

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: What—

Senator SIEWERT: Can you just let me finish this, because I think we are just about there. I understand that you bang them together. Those activities were still being accessed, even though there were two programs that were virtually the same, by lots of people. People were using them and they were providing good services. When you bang them together you could take that two ways. You combine the money as a pool of funding, or you could say, 'Okay, we're going to get rid of one lot of funding from that activity.' I know it is hard, because you have joined a whole lot of programs together, but whether it is two programs or one program, it is still providing really valuable programs to people on the ground.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: What ever that activity is, it is the decision of the government. We made that decision, Senator Siewert. If we collapse five into one, that is our decision. And what the officials are doing is implementing our decision.

Senator SIEWERT: I know that it is your decision. I want to know—

ACTING CHAIR (Senator Seselja): Let the minister finish.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: They are implementing our decision. If we made a decision to stream or to cut or to add to a particular program then that is our decision. You may not like what we have done—

Senator SIEWERT: I can ask what you have done. That is what I asked.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Yes, but the decision of what we have done is a decision of government. That is the bottom-line. You can go around and around as long as you like. We are here until 7.30.

Senator MOORE: We were not questioning that you made the decision. We are trying to find out what the impact of the decision is.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Thank you.

Senator MOORE: There is no question in our minds—we have struggled long enough through this to know—that we are talking about decisions of government. We are trying to find out—Senator Siewert was looking at a particular area—what is the impact of these decisions on the services that were being provided. That is what we are trying to find out.

Mr Pratt: As I have attempted to explain, we will not know, until we have gone through the selection process. In a hypothetical case—we have not done this forensically yet—

Senator MOORE: You are not allowed to do that, but nonetheless, go ahead.

Mr Pratt: We could find that we have two almost identical programs which provided services to 100 people. We might find, through this process, that within the allocation of money which government has decided to appropriate for that purpose, even though we have simplified and streamlined the program arrangements demand has changed. So in the future—if we have the capacity to do this—we will fund 120 people. So it is just impossible for us to explain that any further.

Senator MOORE: But what we should know, Mr Pratt, without question, is what was happening in 2012-13. What should be beyond question is what was being funded then. With the change we have in 2013-14, through the streamlining process, we should be able to look at what we are gathering in to the new areas—the so delightfully put 'banging together'. We should know what we are banging together.

Mr Pratt: My point is that we will not know that until we have gone fully through the banging-together process.

Senator MOORE: But won't we know that elements have come together? Won't we know that?

Mr Pratt: No, Senator.

Senator MOORE: Why won't we know that?

Mr Pratt: Because it is subject to the selection processes, which will determine—

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Open today.

Senator MOORE: Yes, but the tenders are out there. You are asking people to tender to do work. The unknown is how much of that money will be expended. I do not believe that you have gone out to this tender process with all this documentation not knowing what you are asking people to do.

Mr Pratt: But if you look at the bottom table on the one we have been looking at, we can say that notionally we have got up to \$182.65 million for emergency relief and up to \$3½ million for food relief. Once we see the applications from potential providers and what they are asking for, we will then allocate up to those amounts in those areas. Conceivably, if the market threw up that we needed to put more into food relief, we would go back to

government and say that it is open to government to decide to put \$180 million into emergency relief and \$5.5 million into food relief. We just will not know until we have gone through the selection process.

Senator MOORE: But what you do know is the parameters you are setting in which that can operate. You are actually setting a parameter—within financial crisis and material aid, the tasks that are done within that area will be funded under this budget to the total of whatever 102.654 plus 3.500 is. That is the bucket that you have allocated to financial crisis and material aid.

Mr Pratt: That is right, and, as the minister has said, that is the government's decision that there will be \$186 million for that purpose. These are up-to amounts, they are notional and they are subject to the selection process. At some stage we will know what we allocate there.

Senator MOORE: But it is not going to be 250.65—that is what we know. The government decision is: this is how big the bucket is going to be.

Mr Pratt: Well, that is certainly the decision at this stage. If circumstances change considerably—and one of the advantages of this broadbanded is that it would be open to government, if it wanted to, to increase the allocation from some other area. It is all fungible.

Senator SIEWERT: So the three items here—the three broadbanded areas—you were just talking to Senator Moore around potentially altering between emergency relief and food relief. Is it notional between those two? I had understood that across all of those it was. Was that a correct understanding?

Mr Pratt: Yes, Senator. It is open to government to make a new decision about its allocation of funds across these program components.

Senator SIEWERT: That is across all of them in one activity area?

Senator MOORE: During the four-year period you can change your mind?

Mr Pratt: Well, subject to anything that is contracted, of course.

Senator MOORE: That is my next point. If people signed up contracts and say that in that area—I am going to go back to the document—196-something is available for that region, if contracts are set for a four-year period—

Mr Pratt: The contracts are the same as they have always been in that respect.

Senator SIEWERT: But, even in this financial year, say the bulk of the applications are financial crisis and material aid—because that is at the top of the list—if you got lots this round that showed that there was a greater weighting on provision for that area—and I understand they are longer term grants—could you change some of the allocations—

Mr Pratt: It is always open to government to do that.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Just as it was open to Senator Moore, when they were in government—

Senator SIEWERT: I am not even having a go about that. I just simply asked a question.

ACTING CHAIR: And the minister was simply giving an answer.

Senator SIEWERT: No—she was jumping in to have a go when I was not even having a go.

ACTING CHAIR: She is entitled to answer the question.

Senator SIEWERT: I did not ask her a question.

ACTING CHAIR: But she is entitled, nonetheless.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Well, when Labor were in power they certainly had their priorities. As far as we are concerned, we will make decisions that we believe are appropriate in this space. Can we move on, or are we still on No. 3?

Senator MOORE: We are using No. 3 as a clear example, because I believe the same kinds of things could be done program by program. Is that not correct?

Mr Pratt: The issues are the same.

Senator MOORE: Yes, so we are using No. 3 because it is an issue that is of great interest to a number of people in this area. I still want to know whether someone can tell me—not necessarily tonight—what exactly came under the programs in 2012-13? What were the subheadings under the programs in 2012-13?

Ms Bennett: In your pack, we made the point—

Senator MOORE: The yellow pack?

Ms Bennett: No, in your big printed packet.

Senator MOORE: Right, the blue pack. What page?

Ms Bennett: Acknowledging that you have not had a chance to read it, this is the public information. I think the point to make is that people looking for these services would be looking at what they have done. As the secretary said, the things that we did in the past are articulated to where they now sit into the future state. It goes into more detail, obviously, in the selection information. But these elements have been mapped out and they are available on the website. They show people the providers, and they will be able to see the types of services that they provided in previous years and how they map into the new design that we have.

Senator MOORE: I have page 2.1, which is the emergency relief page. What about short-term loans, the ones we talked about before? Where in those generalised statements are those special short-term loans to the Brotherhood of St Laurence and others?

Ms Hefren-Webb: They would now go into Financial Counselling, Capability and Resilience, because they are aimed at building people's financial resilience, skills and ability to undertake savings, repay loans et cetera. So they were going to that—

Senator MOORE: You have a grey box on the right which has an arrow into the green thingy—I don't know what that thingy is. If I were looking as a provider for financial loans—

Ms Hefren-Webb: Financial resilience talks about offering a variety of safe and affordable financial services and products et cetera. They are not available through mainstream providers. They include no interest loans, low interest loans or other appropriate loans and matched savings.

Senator MOORE: I was looking for the word 'loans'. I would go there and I would map my way across to the green one and know that it is in that particular box.

Ms Bennett: Then, when you go through the selection material, it will have the notional 'up to' amount.

Senator SIEWERT: Say I have already had funding from you, like the Brotherhood of St Laurence. When you contacted each of the organisations, as you said you have done, did they have to follow this or did they get a map of where they used to get funding from and where it is now?

Ms Bennett: The information was released this morning, at the same time to everybody—publicly. As we have set out in one of the attachments, there are hotlines people can ring. They can email to ask a question. The maps have been provided. In the letter that they received, there was an explanation on a broad level about the changes that were being made. There were information sessions, which we also discussed, and they were talked through at those times. But the absolute detail about the money and the translation into it was all released this morning. We believe that we have used a lot of avenues to communicate the changes that have been made and we are still available to make explanations or take any further questions that providers might have about where they are now and what it means in the new framework.

Ms Woolley: If you look at the questions and answers on the website—there are about 300 of them—just about every conceivable question like, 'I got funding under blah. Where do I fit?' has been answered, and this will continue to happen as people look at the selection packs and ask, 'Which one should I apply for?' We will continue to assist in directing people.

Ms Bennett: Every question that anybody asks is put on the website so that everybody gets to see the same questions that everybody has asked.

Senator SIEWERT: Good. That is a great thing.

Ms Bennett: You can find it on the website. It is under the frequently asked questions, I think. That keeps being refreshed and we provide an assurance. As I said, there is a hotline where you can ask questions, and those questions get put on the frequently asked questions, or you can email and you will be responded to, and it will also go on the frequently asked questions so that every organisation that is involved in this process gets the same information consistently and at the same time as everybody else.

Senator MOORE: Has there been a government decision to reduce funding in financial counselling?

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Can I just answer that? We have made certain decisions and, as has been indicated, there has been a reduction of \$240 million to grants funding over the four years, and grants funding will still remain at nearly \$20 billion across those four years. That is a decision we have made.

Senator MOORE: I have read that. I am asking: has there been a government decision to reduce funding for financial counselling? Under this same area, in the grey box—financial resilience, financial capability, Commonwealth financial counselling—has there been a reduction in the quantum of funding in those services that used to be under Commonwealth financial counselling?

Ms Hefren-Webb: There has been a decision, as articulated, to make a reduction of \$9.791 million over the whole financial wellbeing and capability program.

Senator SIEWERT: What we are trying to find out is how then we allocate that across those—

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Senator Siewert, that is the nth time this evening. We have tried to explain to you, Senator Siewert. What part of this do you not understand? It is just not possible. The secretary has tried to explain to you the max that we can go in terms of providing you with information in this space. We have given you as much as we can. We are still going over old ground.

Senator SIEWERT: I am trying really hard not to get angry here.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: If you cannot understand it, Senator Siewert, we have tried.

Senator SIEWERT: Can you please stop making implications?

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Senator Siewert, we have explained it to you. We have tried to explain it to you. We have re-explained it to you. We will try another way.

Senator SIEWERT: You are so rude!

Senator MOORE: Senator Fierravanti-Wells, the unfortunate thing is that, until 7.30, this time belongs to us.

Senator SIEWERT: It was supposed to be eight, and we thought that we could get this done in that time, but you are taking up so much time—

CHAIR: It was 7.30.

Senator SIEWERT: When we were out there doing estimates, we said 4.30 to eight.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: It is 7.30, Senator Siewert, so don't waste your time—

Senator MOORE: We have accepted it is 7.30—

Senator SIEWERT: I have not, not with this carry-on.

Senator MOORE: so basically we are here to ask questions. If you do not agree with our questions, that is your decision, but we are here to ask questions and that is what we will do. If we have to ask the same question because we do not get it a number of times, we will. Chair, I thought Senator Siewert was asking questions.

CHAIR: Please continue, Senator Siewert.

Senator SIEWERT: I thought they were fairly reasonable questions. You have a quantum for how much funding you have delivered for financial counselling and capability and resilience.

Senator MOORE: The allocation here is 53,506 and 8,936, and all those things you have got there. I am not going to read them all out. That is the bucket. What we want to find out, I think, is whether that bucket has been reduced.

Mr Pratt: Again with risk of going over old ground, in terms of the saving that was applied to the former program structure, as set out in the fourth line under the top box, which is the \$9.791 million, that basically comes off the top of the older, bigger program, with more components in it, so it comes off the top and then we have a new bucket of money with ons and offs for the next year, and we have notionally identified those amounts for financial counselling. We will not know just how much we will spend, on an apple-with-apple comparison between the two, until we have gone through the process.

Senator MOORE: So you cannot tell us where the \$9.791 million savings are coming from? When you have carved up—and we are getting deeply into bad analogies here—or have come up with the figures that you have put out to public tender have you not taken the \$9.791 million across—

Ms Bennett: If you add the combination of all of those, which are the like activities that existed in other programs across the department, the best estimate, with the provisos that are listed, is the department spent \$122.960 million in 2013-14. Changes were made that are listed, including what were ending programs. One component of that is that \$9.7 million came off the top of that \$122.9 million, but there were other pluses that went on that were other measures. That brings us to the \$139 million. Over the years there are other adjustments that are made for other measures that have come through.

The allocation over the forward years is \$579 million. So the agility that the secretary mentioned aligns to what is in the PBS. We do need to, unless something does change, spend within that appropriation of \$139 million, \$164 million, \$139 million and \$135 million as has been set out in those activities with some agility depending on what the providers bid for at what price. We will not know that. So if you are asking for the previous year what was spent for one element, we will not know until the selection whether providers have still asked for that element, joined up other components and decided to blend three or four different services and then cover the field

of what we are asking, whether that is by location or the nature of the service, until we go to the tender and we have resolved how much we are paying for those elements. At that point we will know what the actual expenditure by government within that appropriation makes up those components.

Mr Pratt: I apologise, Senators, but I am never going to be able to tell you what proportion of that \$9.791 million in savings from the \$240 million measure was financial counselling. It is never going to be possible to do that because it has not been taken from subcomponents in that way; it has come off the top. We have allocated the rest based on ons and offs, which is in fact in the next financial year \$139 million. I can never tell you how much came from financial counselling.

Senator SIEWERT: Once we see the allocations, once the grants come in, we might be able to compare it a little more.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Senator Siewert, an organisation that may have been doing A, B, C and D, according to what Ms Bennett has just said, may now tender for A, B, D and E so the exercise of comparing apples with apples is—and this is basically what both Ms Bennett and Mr Pratt have been trying to say—a very difficult one.

Senator SIEWERT: I do understand.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Understanding why I gave the answers I gave before in terms of not being in a position to respond to what you were asking—

Senator SIEWERT: It, in fact, was an entirely different question that I was asking before. In terms of the discretionary grant program measure, I understood from our previous discussion at last estimates around the allocation of the emergency relief funding that it is new funding. It is included here as new funding. But the overall discretionary money that has come out is still that 9.791. So that new budget item with the discretionary grant program has gone down. How does the 20 million there—this is for the first year for it?

Mr Pratt: The \$9.791 million is the share of the \$240 million savings in 2014-15 that applies to the financial wellbeing and capability line—it is that proportion. It does not relate to—

Senator SIEWERT: To that new money?

Mr Pratt: No.

Senator SESELJA: What kind of feedback have you been receiving from the provider community over the new extended five-year contracts? Are you able to give us some information on that?

Ms Hefren-Webb: The organisations that have received the new five-year funding agreements have expressed how delighted they are to have security of funding going forward. As you know, many of them have to make staffing and accommodation decisions and so forth. Knowing that they have a five-year funding agreement enables them to make longer term decisions, undertake better planning et cetera, so we have had a deal of positive feedback from those organisations.

Senator SESELJA: That has gone from a three-year agreement currently?

Ms Hefren-Webb: The last lot of funding agreements were three-year funding agreements.

Senator SESELJA: We often get feedback, and I have got feedback locally, from providers and that three-year funding round is the bane of their existence. It is difficult, I understand the balancing act for governments, but I do get the same sort of feedback, that where there is a bit more long-term stability they can make better decisions. Have you heard anything from them about their ability to retain staff and those kinds of things?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Yes, and to hire quality staff, because people are really interested in the security of tenure. If they can offer someone a contract over a five-year period they may be able to attract a higher quality performer at the same price than they would have under a shorter term funding arrangement. As you know, it enables them to undertake their strategic planning with greater security as well.

Senator SESELJA: Minister, I think you said earlier that the applications had opened.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Yes, today.

Senator SESELJA: What is going to be the time frame for applications to be assessed?

Ms Woolley: Applications are open for a five-week period and then following that we move into a period of assessment of applications. There is an attachment that we have provided to the committee that details that.

Senator SESELJA: I am sorry, I do not have the attachment in front of me. Who makes the ultimate decision about which organisations are funded and which are not?

Ms Woolley: The delegation for decision making sits with the department on these selection processes.

Senator SESELJA: This might be in the handout as well. Once a particular grant is approved, by what means and within time frame will you be notifying successful applicants?

Ms Bennett: At this stage, and this is a best estimate, somewhere between 27 October and 14 November we will be working with providers, advising them that they are successful and working through what the contract negotiations for the services are. We are aiming towards having executed grant agreements with all those organisations between 17 November and 12 December and that they will take effect in the beginning of the New Year.

Senator SESELJA: Just to be clear, 12 December is when the negotiations will be finalised?

Ms Bennett: Yes, finalised.

Senator SESELJA: But the contracts will not be necessarily be signed?

Ms Bennett: Yes, contracts signed. They will know between 6 and 23 October if they have been successful.

Senator SESELJA: Is there a particular date by which all the grants are signed, sealed and delivered and published on the departmental website?

Ms Bennett: We are hoping very quickly after 12 December.

Ms Woolley: There is a requirement on the department to publish on our website not later than 14 working days after the grant agreement takes effect. It will depend on what exactly that date is when the department would be required to publish that information.

Senator CAROL BROWN: With the five-year funding agreements that were offered, were all components under that program offered five-year agreements?

Ms Hefren-Webb: All providers except where there were issues around performance or compliance with departmental requirements.

Senator CAROL BROWN: What about Communities for Children Direct?

Ms Hefren-Webb: No.

Senator CAROL BROWN: They were not under that area?

Ms Hefren-Webb: No. Communities for Children Facilitating Partner Services received five-year funding agreements. Communities for Children Direct, which is a separate program, received a six-month extension. Those providers may be interested in applying through the Children and Parenting Sub-Activity outlined.

Senator CAROL BROWN: What was the reasoning for not offering them five-year agreements?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Communities for Children Direct Services are a combination of about nine different original programs that were brought together in 2011 in a previous broadbanding exercise. There were some that were very, very small and some that were very large. They were very different in type. While some had been reviewed and evaluated, others had not. We thought it useful to go through a selection process in order to determine what was the best use of that amount of funding.

Senator CAROL BROWN: So is it planned that providers will be offered five-year contracts?

Ms Woolley: The decision about five-year agreements is that there is a commitment—and this is through a lot of Q&As on the website—that, where appropriate, five-year agreements would be offered. Obviously that relies upon going through the selection process and determining what the mix of applications are and the spread of those and the appropriateness of giving those particular organisations or activities five-year funding.

Senator CAROL BROWN: Is it possible that some Communities for Children Direct may be offered five-year agreements?

Ms Woolley: It is possible.

Ms Hefren-Webb: Correct. Some current providers may be offered a five-year agreement to provide Children and Parenting services into the future.

Senator SIEWERT: It will not be called Communities for Children Direct anymore?

Ms Hefren-Webb: No. It will be called Children and Parenting. The other thing to say, as Ms Woolley implied, is that in some cases there will be an activity—for example, the royal commission services, where it is to meet a particular point in time and a particular need. So a five-year agreement may not be an appropriate decision. There will be some circumstances like that.

Senator SIEWERT: Can I ask an overarching question? In relation to the tables that you have provided here, you commented before that these are not all the programs; it is just where the pluses and minuses are. In terms of

where the other program sit, do you have an overall map of those—the old programs, not just the plus and minus ones?

Ms Hefren-Webb: The honeycomb diagram, I guess, provides that.

Senator SIEWERT: It provides the previous, before broadbanding, but the actual granting programs that were under those—all of them, not just the ones that had the plus and minus?

CHAIR: Would you have to take that on notice?

Ms Bennett: There were different elements of grants in all of those programs. Some activities were for grants. Some were not under grants, they were under different selection processes, so they could have been procured services.

Ms Hefren-Webb: For example, financial management, which was outcome 3.1 under the former structure, from memory had six activities. That would be material that would be in old portfolio budget statements.

Senator SIEWERT: Okay, that is where you can track them, but you don't have a more detailed schematic than this?

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Can I remind you, Senator Siewert, that at the beginning of the estimates there was another document tabled which showed a breakdown of the programs under the previous portfolio budget arrangements going into the new arrangements. I think it was a document where the colours matched what was going where. I believe that was tabled at the beginning by Ms Bennett.

Senator SIEWERT: I recollect that. What I am after is the granting programs that are not listed here.

Ms Hefren-Webb: Those are all the programs, but some of them would have subcomponents and activities—

Senator SIEWERT: It is just the subcomponents that are not listed here—is that correct?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Correct. It is not listed to that level of detail.

Ms Bennett: Also, I could point to pages 42 and 43 of the PBS, which align to that document we tabled previously—it was the same information that is provided in this—which shows where previous arrangements translated from either another department or another part of the department into the new program arrangements.

Senator SIEWERT: I will go back and have a look at this and try and map it. I am trying to find out what the commitment was for each of these.

Ms Bennett: Some of them are listed, so you can go to program 6, which was referred to as 'Gender equity for women', and you can see the components of that, for trafficked women. It does align to the previous PBS that would have given you those components where it went into that detail in past PBSs.

Senator SIEWERT: All right. I might need to wait until next estimates and then find out where some of this funding is allocated and see if I can compare it.

Ms Bennett: The allocations will not be known until the end of the process which we have set out in that attachment.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, I meant the appropriate estimates once this process is finished. I understand that, because by October you are not going have completed the process.

Senator MOORE: Can I go to the blue sheet on Strengthening Communities. There are two upcoming selection rounds that have 'not open today'. Can you clarify what that is? It says 'open' and 'restricted' but then , in brackets, 'not open today'.

Ms Woolley: We have just provided you, for completeness, with a complete list of all rounds when the dollars are there. These ones are just not part of the ones that are open today, for a range of reasons. In part it is administrative issues about staging the large number of selections that we have.

Ms Bennett: Some might be that there is committed money.

Ms Woolley: There is committed money to a point.

Ms Bennett: They are fully committed in current contracts at this point in time.

Ms Woolley: Was your question about why they are not part of today?

Senator MOORE: It says selection approach and 'open', and I thought that meant that they were open.

Ms Hefren-Webb: No, open means available to any applications as opposed to restricted.

Senator MOORE: So I take it community development and participation is open and also open today.

Ms Bennett: Yes.

Senator CAROL BROWN: I might just ask another general question, and forgive me, because I have ducked out a couple of times. You have talked about one of these documents, which says that you have gone forward with this new way of working in broadbanding the grants because it is what communities want and need. You have obviously done consultation on that, so could you just explain what you actually did?

Ms Woolley: Yes I can.

Senator CAROL BROWN: And give me some time frames, please.

Ms Woolley: I think this is in the documentation, because this has been the subject of questions and answers on the website. What has been talked about is that, over a period of time, the former departments that now make up the Department of Social Services hear from service providers in the course of our business about a number of things about the way that they interact with the department, including having to deal with multiple different types of processes which are not always necessarily run in the same sorts of ways, the red tape and the other factors that impact on doing business with the agency. That is at the mechanical level.

There is also the inflexibility at times within the previous program structure, which might have been narrow or siloed and did not enable organisations, for example, to put in applications which might see them do a range of activities across a continuum or work more closely with a consortium arrangement. They are the sorts of things that have, I think, fairly commonly been raised across policy areas which have informed some of this thinking, and there are other documents that other people have written about this phenomenon of having to deal with multiple different systems within large agencies.

Senator CAROL BROWN: I can understand the feedback you have received over a number of years, but did you consult on the broadbanding in this particular honeycomb structure?

Ms Woolley: Not through formal consultation.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: In any case, Senator Brown, it is a decision of the government to restructure in that way,

Senator CAROL BROWN: I understand that.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: We have made that decision. We think it is appropriate, and I will just add that it was a commitment that we took to the last federal election. We said that we would reduce red tape for civil society, and we are delivering on that. This structure is part of that delivery of our election commitments.

Senator CAROL BROWN: I understand that, thank you, Senator. It says in the document here that it is including new grant programs that are better suited to what communities want and need. I would assume from that that there would have been some consultation on the new structure, but that has not happened.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: It is a decision of government to go into this change. As we said earlier, we are reducing and streamlining from 18 down to seven. We have made that decision. We gave an election commitment, and we are now doing that—and we are doing it, might I add, in a very open and transparent way. Yes, it is new. We consulted and we then had an election. As part of that election process, we made a commitment, and now we are delivering on that commitment. That is your answer.

Senator CAROL BROWN: These are very simple questions.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: I am answering them.

Senator CAROL BROWN: But there has been no consultation.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: We consulted.

Senator CAROL BROWN: Who is we?

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: The coalition. I have answered your question. We had an election—perhaps you did not notice, Senator Brown.

Senator CAROL BROWN: It is those exact sorts of comments that make what could be a very straightforward process in asking a simple question—

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: We went to an election process. As part of that election process—

Senator CAROL BROWN: You do not want to answer any questions.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: I am just trying to explain to you that when you go to an election you make a commitment. We made a commitment that we would change the process.

Senator CAROL BROWN: And in the document it says that this is what the communities want and need. I suppose this is what the coalition thinks the communities want and need, not through consultation in the department.

CHAIR: Senator Brown and Parliamentary Secretary, this is not a productive use of the time. Do you have a question, Senator Brown?

Senator CAROL BROWN: I did ask a question of the department—

CHAIR: And I think you have had an answer.

Senator CAROL BROWN: No. I will clarify: the department has not gone out and done consultation on the new structure.

Mr Pratt: If you will accept a personal assessment and judgement, and I will give a slightly different context, under my previous responsibilities I certainly spent a lot of time in Aboriginal communities. This sort of issue is exactly what they used to complain about most in dealing with government programs. They said there were too many of them. We had lots and lots of contractual requirements and they spent a lot of time on that sort of stuff. So, to the extent that I have informed government decisions around this, that is—

Senator CAROL BROWN: I understand that and the officers at the table actually indicated that way. My follow-up question was: was there consultation on this structure? I got a response from the senator and, from that, I asked whether the department had consulted on this structure. If they have not, that is fine and we can move on. It is not a difficult question.

Ms Bennett: This structure was part of a budget measure and, when the announcement was made, we undertook consultations, discussions and briefings as soon as we were able to do so.

Senator CAROL BROWN: Thank you.

Senator MOORE: I am fixated on the blue sheets. I know there is no subject expert, but the explanation on national initiatives relates to current national initiatives of \$31.311 million in 2013-14 and \$28.704 million for 2014-15. I take it that \$2.607 million is the only saving there. I am not at all sure what the explanation beside that means.

Ms Bennett: We do not have the personnel, but we will be able to provide that to you on notice.

Mr Pratt: I think what that is saying is that there was, from the previous year, extra spent in 2013-14 picked up and then it has gone back to where it was or to a similar level. So it is more a comment about the amount spent in 2013-14 than what is anticipated to be spent in 2014-15.

Senator MOORE: There is no line there to say that anything under national initiatives was subject to any part of the shared savings for a change in the grants?

Mr Pratt: There was no attribution of the \$240 million to this—

Senator MOORE: Nothing at all?

Mr Pratt: No.

Senator MOORE: Then we get all the aged-care ones and the disability ones.

Ms Bennett: Which one?

Senator MOORE: I just have all the others that tend to flow in. They make sense to me. Some of them are subject to the discretionary grant program reform measure and the savings have been allocated appropriately.

Senator CAROL BROWN: I have a question, and you might not be able to answer it, which is fine. When the minister was talking about the marriage vouchers, I do not want to verbal him but I think there was a media article about him extending the trial to couples expecting a new baby or who have just had a child. Is that right?

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: If you give me a copy of the media article to which you are referring and provide a copy to the committee, as is—

Senator CAROL BROWN: Has the department been asked to look at that?

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Chair, can I ask if Senator Brown is referring to an article? In the past, I have certainly been asked to tender copies of articles, so, if Senator Brown has a copy of that article, we will look at it and the officials can provide an answer.

CHAIR: I think she would then rephrase the question.

Senator CAROL BROWN: I did. It is obviously not a secret but has the department been asked to do any work on extending the trial to couples expecting a new baby or just had a child?

Ms Hefren-Webb: The trial as announced prior to the election in the coalition's policy documents always did extend to people at different stages of their relationship. The trial provides funding for people to seek educational counselling in a committed couple. It can be a long-term couple. They could be recently together. They could be engaged. They could be a separated couple. Couples just having had or expecting a baby were always in scope.

Senator CAROL BROWN: That was easy, wasn't it?

CHAIR: Given that in some cases you will be moving from organisations having lots of little pots of money to ones having a significant pot of money, could you explain some of the quality assurance measures that you have put around this to ensure that you get good outcomes and that the organisations have the capacity?

Dr Reddel: The department, given we have got a variety of activities and programs coming from the incoming agencies that have been utilising different methods into the new department, utilises a legislative based process through residential aged care, for example, disability employment. There are accreditation schemes, aged-care standards, outcome quality standards and more policy based performance standards in the family support program space.

CHAIR: Given that you are talking about larger amounts of money in one program—in one pot so to speak—what have you changed to ensure that your quality assurance around those grants is rigorous?

Ms Bennett: I think this question goes partly to risk profiling, and we haven't quite finalised this. We have some time to work this through but it is assessing the risk of those organisations.

Mr Pratt: We do that at a number of levels looking at the grant level in terms of the size of the grant; the service provider in terms of—

CHAIR: How long have they been doing this for?

Mr Pratt: their capacity; the size of the organisation and their track record; and then the actual activity and the risk associated with the activity that we are funding the service provider for. We couple that together. We have looked at that in terms of the funding agreement. I think we talked at previous estimates about it being streamlined from around 50 clauses down to between 20 and 29 but, within that in terms of the reporting, we look at both financial reporting acquittals but also increasingly better performance reporting, which is also linked to how we do more outcome based reporting which is part of the reforms that are associated with the new grant regime. It is high-level quality assurance but then the risk profile in terms of what level of treatment we do, we need to utilise for reporting or follow up for financial reporting and activity reporting.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: It is a major change. As part of that process and the considerable material that has been provided to prospective grant applicants, it goes into a lot of detail—probably more detail than we had in the past. Through the material that has been provided to senators, it is really worth while going through even down to tip sheets and things like that to assist the process through the electronic process. Dr Reddel may be able to give us a bit more detail.

Dr Reddel: It was also mentioned on one of the A3 documents. I think we were talking about it before the phases in the assessment process opening today. You will see that it is quite detailed on that sheet and the sheet that precedes it or follows it, in terms of the assessment process for the grant. So in terms of how we select the final applicant, there are quite a number of steps that we go through, in terms of the applications, looking at them individually and as a whole and asking, 'What does that add up to?'

CHAIR: I see it now, yes.

Dr Reddel: Staff are involved in providing policy advice on: 'Is this delivering the best outcome?' But they are also looking at some of the locational intelligence that we get from our state and territory network. Then we are establishing a selections board which will look at the total population of grant applications as they track their way through the process, beginning once the applications close in July, starting to look at what that adds up to in terms of delivering the best outcome in terms of our final recommendations before the decision is made. At the same time, we try and look at the quality assurance process as we go along. Also we have a quality assurance adviser to provide assessment and advice to staff—

CHAIR: Is that a staff member of the department or is it an external body?

Dr Reddel: That is an external provider that we have contracted. So they are independent of and separate from the department. At the same time, we have already put in place a probity adviser—

CHAIR: Yes, I was just noticing the probity adviser.

Dr Reddel: Again, they are separate from the department to ensure that how we interrogate or assess applications meets the quality outcomes we want but is also the correct process.

CHAIR: How will the probity adviser report and to whom will they report?

Dr Reddel: The probity adviser will report through what we are calling the advisory board, which will be chaired by senior staff within the department.

CHAIR: Would that be a public document or would it be advice to the minister?

Dr Reddel: In the end it would be advice to the decision makers in the department.

Senator SIEWERT: I have just been trying to ascertain whether I can actually find this information out that I have been seeking through going back through the annual report, and I cannot, because I think I have to wait until the 2013-14 annual report comes out, in which I presume you will report against the financial wellbeing and capability—the old programs—

Mr Pratt: That is right.

Senator SIEWERT: I could not see the expenditure on programs there. Take, for example, the financial wellbeing and capability in the third sheet, in the top blue line—the 122,986 figure that comes from the PBS. What I am trying to do is to find out: what are the programs and what is the expenditure that make up that particular outcome?

Ms Bennett: I am sorry—the first thing is that the annual report will reflect the 11 program structure that applied.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes.

Ms Bennett: But if you refer to 2.1, which sets out the type of activities, they have now moved in. As Senator Moore asked—she was looking for the word about low-interest loans—

Senator SIEWERT: They are the new—

CHAIR: When is the annual report out?

Ms Bennett: So, Senator Siewert, perhaps when the annual report is there and you see the old structure—

Senator SIEWERT: Exactly. I think that that is going to be the easiest way—

Ms Bennett: we can try and map it through. But, as the secretary said, there will not be, because of the combination—

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, I understand that—

Ms Bennett: There were a lot of areas that worked across the department, and some have moved. But it is the services and the programs that were provided that we can map, rather than—

Senator SIEWERT: I understand that. That is partly what I am after: those programs we can map, and you are saying that I can do that once I get the annual report. I have parts of the figures from previous PBS, which has the figures that are provided there.

Ms Bennett: But also both the annual report and the budget papers do report at program level, so that is why the translation that I referred to earlier, on that page, is a translation from the old program structure that the annual report will report on.

Senator SIEWERT: That is right. But here there is not the funding allocated against each of these programs in the budget? It is pages 42 and 43.

Mr Pratt: It might help to go back to the 2013-14 portfolio additional estimates statements—

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, which are some of the papers that I have here.

Mr Pratt: which do set it out at the program level.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, which is where those funding allocations have come, and I am trying to drill down. I think you are saying that I will have to drill down once we get the annual report.

Mr Pratt: Yes. It may be an annual report into the future.

Senator SIEWERT: No, wouldn't it be 2013-14? For the figures that I am after now, it will be the 2013-14 one.

Ms Bennett: As to that on pages 42 and 43, the annual report will relate to the 2013-14 year and those programs that are listed there, up to program 11 or something, wherever they go to.

Senator SIEWERT: You only give programs; you do not give the actual grants.

Ms Bennett: They will be listed in that.

Senator SIEWERT: Where do you list, therefore, when you are funding the different grants? Where do you list against those? Do you ever list against them?

Ms Bennett: All our grants are available on our website under those previous program arrangements.

Senator SIEWERT: But you do not report in your annual report against the individual grants—the actual programs—do you?

Ms Bennett: No.

Senator SIEWERT: That is impossible to find out.

Ms Bennett: Yes. Because grants are provided to an individual organisation.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes. I am not after the individual; I am after the actual subprograms that we were talking about earlier—the funding against them. I will put some questions on notice.

Senator MOORE: I have skimmed through outcome 2, and I want to find out where I find the no-interest loans—the capacity for that.

Ms Hefren-Webb: It is in Financial Wellbeing and Capability, and it is in the subactivity 'Financial Counselling, Capability and Resilience'.

Senator MOORE: So that is outcome 2, subsection 4?

Ms Hefren-Webb: In outcome 2, in the—

Ms Bennett: 2.1.

Ms Hefren-Webb: Families and Communities Program. Financial Wellbeing and Capability includes a subactivity—are you looking at this or are you looking at—

Senator MOORE: No, I am looking at the whole document, the biggie—all the stuff that has gone public that is on the web.

Ms Hefren-Webb: In outcome 2, No. 4: 'Financial Counselling, Capability and Resilience'. I would comment that the current funding agreements for no-interest loans run for another year—

Senator MOORE: I know, yes.

Ms Hefren-Webb: so we are not seeking necessarily applications for no-interest-loan-type schemes under this round at this time. But that is the subactivity that they will belong to when they come up for selection. They will belong to that subactivity.

CHAIR: That means that someone could be putting in an application in that area—

Ms Hefren-Webb: Yes, they could.

CHAIR: if they thought they had a good new approach to make?

Ms Hefren-Webb: If that was their judgement based on the guidelines; correct.

Senator MOORE: They could put it in now? Why would they put it in now if the funding for the current providers goes through until next year?

CHAIR: A new provider.

Ms Bennett: They may combine.

Ms Hefren-Webb: This is a hypothetical, but an organisation that currently does financial counselling might decide it wants to start its own no-interest loans scheme, different from the current one, and may submit that that is part of its proposal. I am not saying that any of them will or that we expect them to. That is a hypothetical.

Mr Pratt: This is a demonstration of my oft made point that we are keeping all of these services and interventions in the new broadbanded arrangements. So if you look at the document 2.1 over on the right-hand side under 'financial resilience' it in fact list low-interest loans.

Ms Bennett: It is in your blue folder.

Senator MOORE: But it is not listed in documents like this. That is why I could not find it.

Ms Hefren-Webb: It is not a specific selection criteria.

Senator MOORE: You have to be particularly creative to put in a claim for it, wouldn't you, if it is not open?

Mr Pratt: It is, though, in material available to people. It indicates the sorts of services that might be provided under this.

Senator MOORE: It says at the dot point there, which is another one of the 'inability to trace what was to what is to what will be, 'Post-June 2014 money management services and home advice program will be referred to as financial capability.' So, in the past, there were subsections that said 'money management services' and 'home advice'.

Ms Hefren-Webb: In the past there were activities that were money management and activities that were home advice.

Senator MOORE: Did they come under the heading 'money management'?

Ms Hefren-Webb: No. I think what it is referencing that in the past there was a subactivity called 'money management' and a subactivity called 'home advice'. Again, those two activities essentially provide people with budgeting, financial management skills, education, literacy—

CHAIR: So it was financial counselling.

Ms Hefren-Webb: More financial literacy than counselling. I guess we use—

CHAIR: And they came to your place?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Sometimes it was in the home; sometimes it was in a service. With 'home advice' 'home' stood for something—

Ms Bennett: Household Organisational Management Expenses.

Ms Hefren-Webb: So it did not necessarily have to be an in-home service. Both of those services, again, were—

CHAIR: Silly me not to know that 'home' was an acronym.

Ms Hefren-Webb: trying to build people's skills at budgeting and managing their finances. So, again, it made sense for to us to ask people to apply to run those together.

Senator MOORE: It does fascinate me that we had that long, long discussion about how we could not track things and what was could not be translated into what is now, whereas for those two it clearly says on page 11 in this documentation: 'Post June 2014 money management services and home advice program'—clearly identified—'will be called something else.'

Mr Pratt: We do not have a specific budget for it in the future world. Also we cannot attribute to it any proportion of the \$240 million savings.

Senator MOORE: But you did in the past as up to last financial year; under those areas there was a budget.

Mr Pratt: There was money spent on it.

Senator MOORE: There was a budget line, too.

Mr Pratt: And two years from now we will be able to identify the amount of money spent—

Senator MOORE: That is not my point, Mr Pratt. My point is that there was a budget allocated against those specific programs mentioned in the documentation for the people who are reading it now. Yet, we have not been able to get anyone to say, 'This is what there was.'

Ms Bennett: 'Home advice' is listed in the PBS.

Senator MOORE: Yes, but 'money management' is not.

Ms Hefren-Webb: It is part of the financial management program at 2.1.

Ms Bennett: Page 42 and 43 explain the programs or, in this case, the home advice. It was an element that existed in an old program. In the old program structure it was under 'housing assistance and homeless prevention' and the change in the blocks to the new world explain that element of that program has moved into the families and communities.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: And this was the comment that we provided.

Ms Bennett: We provided that.

Senator MOORE: I know where it is. I am making the point that what I asked for when I first came in here several hours ago was to see what was funded and how it was funded in the past with the budget allocation beside it and what was going into the future. We have been told we cannot get it, and I accept that; but it is there.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: It is there in descriptors, Senator Moore, so you should be very, very clear what you ask for. You were asking for specific amounts of money and that is what we were talking about before. The descriptors were there and the descriptors were provided to you before. You were asking for specifics of money, so do not come in and say you asked for that two hours ago. The question you asked two hours ago is very different to what you are asking now.

Senator MOORE: The question was identical—

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Let us be very clear, Senator Moore—

Senator MOORE: Chair, just repeating does not help—

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: We have been very helpful and we have given you a lot of information, Senator Moore.

Senator MOORE: What I asked for was the descriptors and the budget, which I am still asking for.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: You asked for specific amounts of money—

Senator MOORE: I did, the budget.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: and we went through and explained to you—

CHAIR: I really do not think this is very productive.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: I think we have been very open, Madam Chair, in terms of the information that Senator Moore wanted.

Senator MOORE: So no-one can tell me how much money was budgeted for HOME services in the past?

Ms Bennett: We will take that on notice. We will have to take on notice to see what was in for 2013-14.

Senator MOORE: Absolutely. I know that you had a budget allocated to that. The descriptors are there. It was a clear program. It is even referred to in the documentation. You are explaining to the new people that that is what it used to be and now it is something else.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: That is a decision that was made.

Ms Bennett: It is actually on the blue sheet. The measure that was transferred from another program is listed. HOME advice was transferred for what it was in 2013-14. It was \$1.448 million and that was transferred across from the old program structure of \$2.1 million.

Senator MOORE: I have got that, but what about—

CHAIR: But it cannot be done across the entire—

Ms Bennett: It cannot be done but, drawing on the page that sets the transformation, we have included those where there has been a transfer in these cover sheets.

Senator MOORE: And you have got the ons and offs?

Ms Bennett: The ons and offs and it is an on because it moved from one program to another program. That was the subelement, that small element, of the old homelessness program.

Senator SIEWERT: We were just talking about the loan program that does not finish until next year but other people can apply now if they come up—

Senator MOORE: You can do it 'agilely'.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, agilely. The program already exists, but after next year what is the process?

Mr Pratt: It will ultimately be a decision for government what happens after that.

Senator SIEWERT: Will it come into one of these programs?

Mr Pratt: It will be subject to a future government decision.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: It will be a matter for government. In conclusion, the object of these changes has been to make civil society easier. I find it really interesting that this evening, particularly you, Senator Moore, have been very critical of attempts by us. It was clearly articulated in our election promises that we would make it a lot easier for people to do business. That is really what we are doing.

Senator MOORE: Senator, just saying the words does not make them true.

Senator Fierravanti-Wells: Well you said a lot of words, Senator—

CHAIR: I thank Senator Fierravanti-Wells and officers of the department.

Committee adjourned at 19:33