

## **Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee**

### **SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 22 OCTOBER 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

#### **Department of Human Services**

**Topic:** Grandparent Advisers

**Question reference number:** HS 78

**Senator:** Cameron

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 11 December 2015

**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

- a) Please provide information on the number of clients assisted by each of the Grandparent advisers? (annual, quarterly – whatever they can provide).
- b) Please provide information on the number of contacts through the 1800 line? (The Department previously indicated that it was 30-40 contacts per month).
- c) Please provide information on any wait times people may experience while trying to access a grandparent carer through the 1880 number?
- d) In light of the Senate Committee inquiry in Grandparents Raising Grandchildren has Centrelink done any work in relation to the training for general staff about dealing with grandparents raising grandchildren?
- e) Has the Department been engaged in the development of the Government response to the inquiry report?
- f) Has the Department been engaged in the development of the third Action Plan under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, which DSS has informed us will consider some of the recommendations of the Senate inquiry report?
- g) What is the annual budget allocation is for the current grandparent advisers?

#### **Answer:**

- a) The Department does not collect this information.
- b) Between 1 October 2014 and 30 September 2015, there have been 10,106 calls made to the Grandparent Adviser 1800 telephone service.
- c) There are no wait times for customers who call the 1800 Grandparent Adviser telephone service. Upon calling the service, each customer is routed directly to the Grandparent Adviser within their region. If the Grandparent Adviser is unable to take the call, the call will be diverted to the Grandparent Adviser's voicemail service where the customer will be encouraged to leave a message. Messages are responded to within 48 hours.

- d) The Department has not undertaken training for general staff specific to grandparents raising grandchildren in response to the inquiry report. As part of their standard training, general staff are provided with, and have access to, training and reference material to support, assist and refer grandparent carers to payments and services administered by the department. Where appropriate, grandparent carers are also referred to specialist assistance within the department, including Social Workers and Grandparent Advisers.
- e) Yes.
- f) Yes.
- g) While there is no specific appropriation provided to the Department for the current Grandparent Advisers, an internal allocation of \$473,000 has been made for these positions in the 2015-16 Financial Year.