

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

The committee met on Thursday, 4 June 2015 from 9 am until 11 pm.

The committee called the Department and agencies of the Social Services Portfolio, including the Aged Care Quality Agency and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Among other issues, the following matters were discussed:

- modelling in relation to the Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme,
- the PPL Evaluation: Final Report, including discussion of Table 2.2,
- in relation to the PPL, the move back to an 18 week threshold and the implications for Australia's international obligations and prior commitments, and the number of women who were able to access the Government's scheme and an employer-provided scheme,
- PPL revenue implications, evaluation data, legal costings and the costs of officer engagement in stakeholder work,
- the number of women likely to be affected by the budget change in the out years,
- statistical data on women who receive PPL, such as marital status, indigeneity, cultural and linguistic diversity and size of employer,
- funding allocation for the 1800-RESPECT phone line and the number of unanswered calls,
- Respectful Relations funding cuts,
- allocation of funding and grants to frontline support services, including specialist family violence services and family drug and alcohol services,
- expenditure in relation to violence against women and reasons for including it in the contingency reserve, and funding across the out years for the safety of women and children against violence,
- calls to the income management phone line,
- compulsory income management stream including the measures related to child protection and the budget savings through system redesign,
- the trial of the Healthy Welfare Card for welfare recipients and expenditure and the Department of Social Services' (DSS) engagement with banks,
- the newly created support service Intercountry Adoption Australia,
- Humanitarian Settlement Services and the government's new multicultural policy,
- child support advocacy funding cuts,
- actuarial work on the investment approach to welfare, with the new Welfare Payment Infrastructure Transformation,
- changes to family tax benefits, particularly FTB-B, and the freeze on the eligibility thresholds,

- income support for seniors, including changes to the part-pension cut-offs with regard to assessable assets,
- eligibility for a senior's health card,
- the waiting period for young people before receiving Newstart Centrelink payments,
- changes in the complaint system affecting the Aged Care Quality Agency,
- an update on the Dementia Advisory Clinics,
- 'flying squads' providing support to aged care residents experiencing severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia,
- the Aged Care Approvals Round,
- aged care workforce fund budget cut,
- changes to the Sector Development Fund now administered by DSS,
- the status of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rollout and the Western Australian NDIS MyWay trial,
- respite carers and the NDIS and My Aged Care,
- workforce strategy on the NDIS,
- funding initiatives around the NDIA, and
- the Federal Court ruling on the Business Services Wage Assessment Tool and associated proposed legislation.