

Question:

“Funding for advocacy groups: the Committee understands that child support advocacy groups (e.g. the Lone Fathers’ Association and the National Council of Single Mothers and their Children) are facing considerable uncertainty in relation to levels of ongoing government funding. Could you provide information on the current funding arrangements for these groups, when the arrangements expire, and on the progress toward new funding arrangements.”

DSS response:

Current funding arrangements for child support advocacy groups:

- Child Support Advocacy funding
 - The following five organisations were granted funding to provide feedback and input on child support policies, from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2014:
 - Dads in Distress Support Services;
 - Drummond Street Services;
 - Lone Fathers Association Australia;
 - National Council of Single Mothers and their Children; and
 - Shared Parenting Council of Australia.
 - As part of the Budget announcements, these arrangements were extended for six months until 31 December 2014, while a new approach to the Department’s grant arrangements was being implemented.
 - On 20 October 2014 a further two month extension was granted to the majority of existing DSS grant recipients, and current arrangements for Child Support Advocacy are now due to cease on 28 February 2014.
 - The Government is considering future funding activities and options for child support activities from 1 March 2015.
- The Child Support National Stakeholder Engagement Groups (CSNSEG)
 - The Department engages with these advocacy groups through regular CSNSEG meetings which bring together experts, academics and advocates from a range of child support related fields to provide advice and input about child support policy and practice.
 - The Department, along with the Department of Human Services, pays expenses associated with CSNSEG meeting attendance for non-government members at an estimated cost of \$20,000 per year.