

Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit

Public Hearing – 20 November 2019
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 1

Question reference number: SQ19-000496

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

Do you have an indication of how much has been invested preparing to establish the National Data Collection and Reporting Framework? Including all the related research reports that have been funded under the National Plan?

Answer:

Approximately \$3.0 million across seven research papers.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 2

Question reference number: SQ19-000497

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

The Auditor General found the Department couldn't verify if the implementation plan for the NDCRF had been endorsed – have you subsequently been able to work out if it was or not? When?

- a. Why couldn't this be verified?
- b. Who would need to endorse it? The Commonwealth only? Or all jurisdictions?
- c. What would the process for endorsement be?
- d. Has it ever been to COAG or a Ministerial Council? What happened?
- e. Have you briefed any Minister's about the implementation plan? When?

Answer:

An implementation plan for the NDCRF (referenced by the Australian National Audit Office) was drafted in 2011. The NDCRF was published in 2014.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 3

Question reference number: SQ19-000498

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

In In 2014 the ABS published The Foundation for a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework.

- a. Has the Department assessed the ongoing cost to the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions of an NDCRF? What is it?
- b. IF APPROPRIATE - The Auditor General recommended the Department should “identify and prioritise the sequencing of key activities and funding still required to operationalise the DCRF across jurisdictions” (par 3.11 of the attachment) – why hasn’t this occurred?
- c. What work has been done with the states since 2014 towards an NDCRF?
- d. What work and funding is allocated under the Fourth Action Plan?

Answer:

The National Data Collection and Reporting Framework (NDCRF) is a broad level conceptual map that provides a systematic way of organising data about experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence into information units for statistical collection. This framework cost \$292,296 and was finalised in 2014, therefore the department considers there are no further costs associated with the development of the NDRCF.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 4

Question reference number: SQ19-000499

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

Is there currently an implementation plan to make sure the NDCRF is up and running by 2022?

- a. IF YES – can you pls provide to the Committee on notice/today?
- b. Will the NDCRF be in place by 2022?
- c. Are all state/tertiary jurisdictions on track to have the NDCRF in place by 2022?
Which are on-track and which are not?
- d. Has a decision been made by the Government to proceed or not proceed with the NDCRF?

Answer:

The department considers the National Data Collection and Reporting Framework finalised, and operational.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 6

Question reference number: SQ19-000501

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

Is a National Minimum Data Set something that will be achieved as part of the Fourth Action Plan?

- a. When will it be achieved?
- b. If there isn't nationally consistent data, how will you be able to measure the relative incidence of violence and the effectiveness of funding programs and interventions?

Answer:

The delivery of a National Minimum Data Set is not a planned deliverable under the Fourth Action Plan, as there are alternative mechanisms being progressed.

The National Plan identified four high-level 'indicators of change' to measure reductions in violence prevalence rates to show progress towards reducing violence against women and their children. These indicators can be measured consistently using data from the Personal Safety Survey and Recorded Crimes – Victims collections managed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The Government has also committed to a meta evaluation of the Fourth Action Plan and overall National Plan to assess progress and inform the future policy response.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 7

Question reference number: SQ19-000502

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

Is DSS aware of the current levels of funding for FVPLSs and the funding announcement this week?

Answer:

Yes.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 10

Question reference number: SQ19-000505

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

What is the total funding that has been provided to White Ribbon in the last five years?

a. NOTE – on notice is OK if they can't provide.

Answer:

Between 2015-16 and 2018-19 the Department of Social Services has provided \$1.986 million to White Ribbon Australia.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 14

Question reference number: SQ19-000509

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

Have all staff entitlements been paid for those who worked at White Ribbon?

Answer:

All business in relation to liquidation of White Ribbon Australia are matters for the Liquidator.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 19

Question reference number: SQ19-000514

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

Has funding for WESNET under the Safe Connections program be cut?

- a. Why was this decision made?
- b. What will happen to frontline services for women who need safe phones when funding for WESNET is stopped?

Answer:

The Women's Services Network (WESNET) has been funded \$3.3 million over five years (2015–16 to 2019–20) under the Women's Safety Package to deliver the Safe Phones for Women (Safe Phones) program. Funding under the Women's Safety Package will conclude for all providers on 30 June 2020, including funding for the Safe Phones program.

The Women's Safety Package was always intended as one-off, time-limited funding.

At this time WESNET had not applied for funding under the Fourth Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022*.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 20

Question reference number: SQ19-000515

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

The AIHW has identified data gaps among vulnerable groups and for complex forms of violence, including:

- a. Dowry abuse and dowry related violence
- b. Forced marriage
- c. Trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation
- d. Female Genital Mutilation
- e. Intimate partner violence of women associated with organised crime groups
- f. Prolonged incest

What is DSS doing to ensure data is collected about prevalence so that programs reduce this violence can be designed and targeted? Why isn't data being collected?

Answer:

Under the Fourth Action Plan, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) has received a \$5.639 million grant, executed on 25 June 2019, to undertake research and data projects in support of the five national priorities.

In addition to the ANROWS grant, the department intends to invest \$2 million in key statistical agencies including the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Filling data gaps for vulnerable groups and for complex forms of violence will be part of this work.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 21

Question reference number: SQ19-000516

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written.

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

The Auditor General identified serious weaknesses in the measures used to determine progress against the six outcomes of the national plan – with most being indirect measures.

- a. Why hasn't the Department established or identified better data sets to measure actual outcomes – such as actual rates of violence
- b. Have rates of violence decreased since the National Plan was put in place?
- c. Have the number of women being turned away from shelters decreased?
- d. Have re-offending rates among those that attend perpetrator behaviour change programs decreased?
- e. Are fewer children in families where there is domestic violence?
- f. Have presentations at emergency departments in relation to domestic violence gone down?
- g. What are the rates of family violence in the LGBTI community? Have they gone down?
- h. Are all children who have been exposed to family violence provided with support?
- i. Are there any randomised control trials? Or comparisons between different programs and areas that are being used to inform and change programs?

Answer:

- a) The department funds the Personal Safety Survey (PSS) and National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) to measure the change in the prevalence of violence and attitudes supportive of violence against women over time.

The PSS, conducted by the ABS every four years, collects information through in person interviews with men and women aged 18 years and over, about the nature and extent of violence they have experienced since the age of 15 including:

- current and previous partner violence and emotional abuse since the age of 15

- stalking since the age of 15
- physical and sexual abuse before the age of 15
- witnessing violence between a parent and partner before the age of 15
- lifetime experience of sexual harassment
- general feelings of safety.

The NCAS, conducted every four years by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), collects information about Australian's knowledge of violence against women, attitudes towards gender inequality, attitudes towards violence against women, and intentions if witnessing abuse or disrespect towards women. The results of the NCAS provide a foundation for continued monitoring of the outcomes of the National Plan.

The 2014-15 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) and the 2018-19 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) provide estimates of the prevalence of violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In order to collect more recent data on the prevalence of Family Violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the 2018-19 NATSIHS was enhanced with the addition of a new dedicated module on family and domestic violence under the Third Action Plan. This module was aligned to questions in the NATSISS.

The department has also funded research projects that used the data from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health (ALSWH) including to explore the health effects of family and domestic violence (FDV) amongst culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women and women with disability, as well as factors contributing to increased risk of FDV.

- b) Over the life of the National Plan, the reported rate of sexual violence against women and the reported rate of partner violence against women in the PSS has not decreased.
- c) No.
- d) Perpetrator intervention programs are delivered through state and territory governments.
- e) The estimated number of women who reported their children had seen or heard violence while they were living with their current partner has decreased from 74,300 in 2012 to 60,300 in 2016. The estimated number of women who reported their children had seen or heard violence while they were living with their previous partner has decreased from 568,700 in 2012 to 418,200 in 2016.
- f) The AIHW's National Non-admitted Patient Emergency Department Care Database does not record the cause of injury and cannot identify the assault injuries due to family, domestic and sexual violence. The AIHW is working to improve this collection.
- g) Research on rates of family violence against people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status is limited. In 2006, the Australian Research Centre for Health and Sexuality (ARCHS) published a study referred to as 'Private Lives'.

This surveyed 5,476 people identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex. It found that 32.7 per cent of respondents in this sample reported having been in a relationship in their lifetime where the partner was either verbally or physically abusive.

- h) States and territories have primary responsibility for support services for adults and children affected by family and domestic violence and sexual assault. .
- i) The Government is committed to evaluating the National Plan and Fourth Action Plan to assess the progress that has been made in reducing violence against women and their children, and to inform future policy responses. Crucially, the overall meta evaluation (to commence in 2019-20) will be informed by separate evaluations of the key individual initiatives funded across all jurisdictions. As part of these evaluations, state and territory governments will report on their key achievements and progress under the Fourth Action Plan through national progress reports. This will enable all governments to compare the outcomes of these key initiatives, as well as monitor the progress made against the long-term objectives of the National Plan, including changes needed to improve outcomes in the future.

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Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 22

Question reference number: SQ19-000517

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

How do you know what policy/program success looks like if it is not being measured?

a. Is there any work on defining future measures and goals to determine if programs are successful?

Answer:

Several initiatives will measure progress:

- The development of a new performance monitoring and reporting framework to set the interim outcomes, indicators and measures. This Framework will assess performance against the Fourth Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022* (National Plan), as well as progress in achieving a reduction in violence against women and their children. This will be developed by June 2020 to inform the first national progress report that will come out in September 2020.
- National Progress Reports will use a range of survey and administrative data sources, enabling governments to monitor progress against long-term objectives.
- The National Implementation Plan includes information about planned outcomes, indicators, evaluations and monitoring at an initiative-level, where that information is available.
- An Evaluation Plan will be developed with states and territories during the first year of the Fourth Action Plan, including revised measures of success (with short and medium-term measures). This will build on the Evaluation Plan developed in 2014 for the National Plan.

- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) is developing a 'what works' framework under the Fourth Action Plan to support the overall value of family, domestic and sexual violence initiatives. A 'what works' framework sets out a consistent approach to assessing the relative cost, impact and evidence strength of a range of services, supports or interventions. The framework will assist in future reviews of existing research, and help shape decisions on what research needs to be commissioned.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit inquiry into Efficiency and Effectiveness - Written QoN 23

Question reference number: SQ19-000518

Member: Mr Julian Hill MP, Deputy Chair

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 02 December 2019

Question:

Figure 1.1 (p 15) shows a timeline of key events from 2010 to 2022. Focusing on 2019 key events could you advise the committee of the progress of the following;

- a. July 2019 – Upcoming release of the Fourth Action Plan; and
- b. August 2019 – Planned completion of the Third Action Plan Evaluation
 - (i) Has this been completed?
 - (ii) What lessons have been learnt in relation to effectiveness of the previous action plan?
 - (iii) Has the preliminary results informed any new developments of the Fourth Action Plan?

Answer (a,b, i,ii,iii):

Refer to page 30 of Hansard of the JCPAA hearing. The department engaged KPMG in November 2015 to conduct the evaluation of the Third Action Plan, the final report will be completed in the coming months.