

Department of Finance

Response to Question on Notice

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF SPORTS GRANTS

Inquiry into the Administration of Sports Grants

Hearing of Wednesday, 22 July 2020

Question on Notice 1 (Proof Hansard page 34)

Senator RICE: Thanks, officers. So you are responsible for the overall governance and accountability of these grants programs. Can you give us a bit of a sense of how many grants overall the government administers?

Dr Helgeby: There are several hundred of those. At the most recent additional estimates, back in March, we were asked a question on notice by Senator Gallagher, question reference number F026, where Senator Gallagher asked about how many grant programs there were and the coverage of those. We provided an answer in response to that, and there were 328 that were identified there, subject to grants hubs, which is a way of identifying grants programs that fit within a certain category. So there are several hundred in any given year.

Senator RICE: What's the level of funding that is distributed through these grants programs?

Dr Helgeby: They're highly variable.

Senator RICE: Did you cover that in your question on notice from Senator Gallagher?

Dr Helgeby: We were asked simply for names of programs on that particular occasion, and we provided that. We do, in the financial statements each year, provide an aggregated level of reporting. I don't have the financial statements with me right at the minute, but we might see if we can pull up the most recent data. Individual agencies in their annual financial statements would also report at an aggregate level, so the dollar value of these things in aggregate.

Senator RICE: Of the total program?

Dr Helgeby: Yes.

Senator RICE: Okay. Could you please take that on notice so that we've got that context for the committee.

Response

The table below provides the overall numbers of Grant Opportunities (which includes but does not exactly equate to a grant program) and Grants Awarded, along with the total value of the Grants Awarded for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20
Grant Opportunities	312	395
Grants Awarded	30,912	25,442
Total Value of Grants Awarded (\$million)	\$18,639	\$14,376

This data is drawn from GrantConnect (www.grants.gov.au).

Department of Finance

Response to Question on Notice

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF SPORTS GRANTS

Inquiry into the Administration of Sports Grants

Hearing of Wednesday, 22 July 2020

Question on Notice 2 (Proof Hansard page 34 and 36)

Senator RICE: Of those over 300 grants programs, how many are administered by Commonwealth corporate entities?

Dr Helgeby: There are 71 or so Commonwealth corporate entities. We're aware of perhaps 10 that have a power in relation to grants. I couldn't tell you now what the value of those things are. If you wish to have a clear answer to that, I would have to take that on notice.

Senator RICE: Could you take on notice what those Commonwealth corporate entities' grants programs are and the level of funding that is available under each of those grant programs?

Response

For the 328 grant programs referred to in the March 2020 Additional Estimates and noted in the answer to the Question on Notice F026, none are administered by corporate Commonwealth entities. These 328 grant programs are all subject to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs) and are administered by non-corporate Commonwealth entities.

As corporate Commonwealth entities are not subject to the CGRGs, the Department of Finance is not aware of the grant programs administered by corporate Commonwealth entities.

Department of Finance

Response to Question on Notice

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF SPORTS GRANTS

Inquiry into the Administration of Sports Grants

Hearing of Wednesday, 22 July 2020

Question on Notice 3 (Proof Hansard page 36)

Senator ABETZ: Yes. I think there were two questions I asked Mr Gaetjens, and he kindly suggested that I ask officials from the Department of Finance. So, rather than re-asking the question, could I invite you to have a look at the Hansard of this hearing and provide answers to those matters that I raised on notice, please.

Dr Helgeby: Yes.

(Proof Hansard page 12)

Senator ABETZ: Thank you very much for that. In your experience, having been around Canberra and a staffer for a while—as helpfully advised or asked of you by my colleagues—are you aware of other governments, or previous governments, undertaking similar schemes as this one where the minister does, in fact, ultimately determine what projects are to be approved?

Mr Gaetjens: I think that there would be several examples, and, again, in fact, they'd be too numerous to mention. Community grant programs have probably existed under governments since Federation. I suspect that they will continue too. What the grant guidelines and things like that do is to set out a framework and an approval mechanism that actually does lead to transparency and other things. Here was a situation where there was an identified gap, I think, that the Auditor-General pointed out where the corporate Commonwealth entities had a different situation in terms of explaining the actual decision. Now we're back to a single framework, which I think is a good thing.

Senator ABETZ: Had that single framework previously existed at Federation—

Mr Gaetjens: I think that that would be a question best directed to the finance department.

Senator ABETZ: I shall do that.

Response

A whole-of-government policy framework for the administration of Commonwealth grants was first established in July 2009. This included the *Commonwealth Grants Guidelines* (CGGs) and Regulations 3A (meaning of grant) and 7A (Commonwealth Grant Guidelines) in the *Financial Management and Accountability Regulations 1997*.

The current *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs) were updated and published on 30 August 2017. The CGRGs are a legislative instrument under section 105C(1) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The framework was also updated in 2013 and 2014.

Department of Finance

Response to Question on Notice

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF SPORTS GRANTS

Inquiry into the Administration of Sports Grants

Hearing of Wednesday, 22 July 2020

Question on Notice 4 (Proof Hansard page 12)

Senator ABETZ: I was wondering, out of your general knowledge, whether or not you knew that. Basically the system adopted by Minister McKenzie, as she was at the time, was a similar process that had been adopted by ministers in other community programs in both coalition and Labor governments?

Mr Gaetjens: It might be best, if the Department of Finance is listening, if they could be armed with the advice of, with the guidelines that existed at the time of the Community Sport Infrastructure Grant Program, for how long the grants system had been in place prior to that. I'm not sure about that.

Senator ABETZ: Alright. Thank you for your assistance in that.

Response

A whole-of-government policy framework for the administration of Commonwealth grants was first established in 2009. This included the *Commonwealth Grants Guidelines* and Regulations 3A (meaning of grant) and 7A (Commonwealth Grant Guidelines) in the *Financial Management and Accountability Regulations 1997*.