

Senate Select Committee on Autism

Public Hearing – 27 July 2020
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Select Committee on Autism - Question 2

Question reference number: SQ20-000537

Senator: Hollie Hughes

Type of Question: Spoken. Hansard Page/s: 28

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 21 August 2020

Question:

CHAIR: What I'd also like to know, which you may not be able to provide to me, is: whether or not those programs were put out to open tender and other organisations were asked to bid; how long Aspect has been running these programs; what analysis and feedback has been done on their adequacy; whether or not they are adhering to best practice; whether or not other organisations that consider themselves peak bodies, like Aspect does, are also running similar programs in states or whether Aspect has the monopoly over those.

Mr Broadhead: You're asking in that regard whether there are similar organisations, including funded by states?

CHAIR: Is Autism WA running a similar program to Aspect in New South Wales and ACT, or is Aspect running them nationwide?

Mr Broadhead: We'll do our best in that respect, but obviously when it gets beyond our own remit we may not know everything.

CHAIR: That's okay, but for any programs you fund I want to know if they went out to market—

Mr Broadhead: If we fund them, we will certainly provide you with—

CHAIR: and whether or not they are up to going out to market.

Answer:

The Department of Social Services provides funding to Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) under the following grant programs:

Program	Location	Start date	End date	Selection process
Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) – Autism Advisor Service	NSW	20/10/2008	Program ceasing 31 Mar 2021 - planned transition to the NDIS	Direct approach to Autism Association in each state and territory (with SA administering the grant for NT)
HCWA – Early Days Workshops	NSW	1/07/2011	Program ceasing 30 June 2021 – planned transition to the NDIS	Direct approach to Autism Association in each state and territory (with SA administering the grant for NT)
Children and Parent Support (CaPS) Program	NSW	1/07/2015	30 June 2021 - decisions on future grant rounds TBC	Open competitive process
Jobs and Market Fund (JMF) – Allied Health	NSW, Norfolk Island and TAS	11/02/2020	30 June 2021 - decisions on future grant rounds TBC	Open competitive process

Aspect is a registered HCWA and Better Start for Children with a Disability (Better Start) service provider on the Early Intervention Service Provider Panel (since November 2008).

The department funds a number of other autism-focussed organisations under these programs.

Under grant agreements, providers are required to meet standard reporting requirements, which the department uses to monitor program performance and manage any issues. There are no identified performance issues with Aspect across any department-funded grants.

In relation to similar programs delivered by other providers, the department does not collect information on programs or providers that it does not fund for comparative purposes.