

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Parliamentary Committee Inquiry Hearing
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs

Inquiry into ParentsNext, including its trial and subsequent broader rollout

Department of Jobs and Small Business Question No. SQ19-000191

Senator Murray Watt provided in writing.

Question

PCI - ParentsNext: Privacy

1. What mechanisms are in place to allow ParentsNext participants to decline to share sensitive information with ParentsNext providers, particularly for participants who are domestic violence survivors?
2. Are ParentsNext providers required to abide by the same privacy principle as jobactive providers?

Answer

1. Information about the protection of a participant's personal information is included on the ParentsNext Privacy Notification and Consent Form and the Participation Plan, including advice as to the importance of understanding this information.

During the initial interview, the ParentsNext provider asks the ParentsNext participant to sign the ParentsNext Privacy Notification and Consent Form. At that time, the provider must ensure individuals are aware of the types of personal information they may be required to provide and how this information will be handled.

ParentsNext participants, including those who are required to participate in the program, are also advised when signing their Participation Plan that their personal information can only be collected, used and disclosed where they give permission, or where it is permitted by law.

A ParentsNext participant can decline to sign the ParentsNext Privacy Notification and Consent Form when asked to do so by their provider during their initial interview or appointment.

If the participant refuses to sign, they are still required to participate in the program. However, the types of services the provider can offer the parent may be limited.

2. Yes, ParentsNext providers are obliged to comply with requirements under the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* (Cth) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), including the Australian Privacy Principles.

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Question

PCI - ParentsNext: Individual Consultations

1. Can you table materials and documents from each individual consultation the department had in the lead up to the expansion of ParentsNext?
2. What feedback provided to the Department in those consultations was then reflected in the final version of the ParentsNext program?
3. What feedback did the Department take on board as a result of these individual consultations?

Answer

1. Prior to the 2017–18 Budget decision to expand ParentsNext, the department consulted with a diverse range of stakeholders on what could be done to better assist Indigenous Australians find employment. This included discussing ParentsNext. These consultations included:
 - approximately 90 roundtable meetings with Indigenous stakeholders, employers, peak bodies, employment service providers, and
 - focus groups in 10 locations with Indigenous job seekers and Indigenous Australians not in the labour force (parents in particular), employers and communities.
2. The department undertook further consultations between August and October 2017 to inform the ParentsNext national implementation. This included improvements to: the Department of Human Services' (DHS) letters to participants; key performance indicators; support around domestic violence and childcare; and IT changes.
3. The department considered all feedback received through consultations.