



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

ParentsNext – inquiry launch and call for submissions

Issue date: 7 December 2018

Inquiry into ParentsNext

The Senate Community Affairs References Committee has launched an inquiry into the ParentsNext program.

"ParentsNext is a program designed to assist parents, particularly women, into meaningful and productive employment by the time their children go to school," said Committee Chair, Senator Rachel Siewert. "However, concerns have been raised by participating parents, the community and the social services sector that the program is not meeting its aims."

"The committee wants to understand whether ParentsNext is the best way to help parents," Senator Siewert said.

The committee will be examining a wide range of aspects relating to the ParentsNext trial and broader rollout, including the design and implementation of the program and whether its aims are appropriate and are in the best interests of participating parents, their children and the community.

Call for submissions

The committee is seeking submissions from a wide range of people, including participating parents and service providers. The committee has requested that submissions be received by **1 February 2019**.

While the committee welcomes submissions from parents who have been affected by the implementation of ParentsNext, the committee emphasises that it is not in a position to assist or intervene in individual circumstances.

If you are interested in contributing to the committee's inquiry, you may find it helpful to look at the [guide for preparing a submission](#). It includes suggestions on what to include in a submission, a check list, and information about what happens to your submission once it has been received by the committee.

The committee prefers to publish submissions from private individuals on the inquiry website with names and contact details withheld. If you do not want your submission to be publically available, you can ask the committee to keep your submission confidential – just include the word **confidential** on the front of your submission.

If you have questions, or need more time to write your submission, please contact the Community Affairs secretariat.

DATE REFERRED

4 December 2018

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE

1 February 2019

REPORTING DATE

31 March 2019

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Senator Rachel Siewert
(Chair)

Senator Lucy Gichuhi
(Deputy Chair)

Senator the Hon Kristina
Keneally

Senator Steve Martin

Senator Louise Pratt

Senator Murray Watt

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Inquiry Terms of Reference

ParentsNext, including its trial and subsequent broader rollout, with particular reference to:

- (a) the aims of ParentsNext, and the extent to which those aims are appropriate, having regard to the interests of participating parents, their children, and the community;
- (b) the design and implementation of ParentsNext, including, without limitation:
 - i. the appropriateness of eligibility for compulsory and voluntary participation,
 - ii. the protocol for providers' conduct of Capability Interviews with participants,
 - iii. the design of participation plans, including the range of economic and social participation requirements,
 - iv. the selection of ParentsNext providers,
 - v. the interaction between ParentsNext, business, education and training providers, and health, community and social services,
 - vi. the effectiveness of the communication between:
 - a. participants,
 - b. the Department of Jobs and Small Business,
 - c. Centrelink, and
 - d. ParentsNext providers,
 - vii. the measures, if any, in place to avoid causing risk or harm to vulnerable participants and their children, including participants and children who are victims and/or survivors of family violence,
 - viii. the appropriateness of the aspects of the program specifically aimed at communities with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, and the appropriateness of the broader program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents outside target communities,
 - ix. the effectiveness of the program in supporting the long-term wellbeing of parents and children, and the longer term skills and earning capacity of parents, and
 - x. best practice pre-employment programs for parents;
- (c) the appropriateness of the application of the Targeted Compliance Framework (TCF) to ParentsNext, and the impact of the TCF on participants;
- (d) the oversight of ParentsNext, including:
 - i. the oversight of determinations of non-compliance, and
 - ii. the fairness and efficiency of any complaint handling processes, including protocols around changing providers; and
- (e) any other related matters the committee considers relevant.

Contacts

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All other enquiries: contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 3515 or community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au