

**Senate Finance and Public Administration
References Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

**Inquiry into Delivery of National Outcome 4 of the National Plan to Reduce Violence
Against Women and Their Children**

Question No: 3

Topic: 1800RESPECT

Hansard page: 43

Senator McAllister asked:

So from August 2016 to December 2016. What is the department's role in the negotiations that were taking place?

Dr Baxter: Sure. I would call them 'implementation conversations'. MHS had a contract with RDVSA. They were required to deliver the first-response service, and there were ongoing conversations with RDVSA about how they could deliver that service, recognising that RDVSA delivered the trauma specialist back-end. As for our role, we tried to play a brokering role in helping to bring some of those conversations together. We had understood there was a stalemate on some issues, and so we were involved in those conversations. **I would have to take on notice dates and exactly how many times we were involved in those conversations,** but we did get involved in conversations around why the government had elected to implement a first-responder service and what it was seeking from it. Again, as I've described it all along, it was seeking to assure ourselves that the first-responder service would be able to be implemented in a way that increased service responsiveness and also ensured an ongoing degree of quality. That is how I would describe the role that we played.

Answer:

The Department performed a brokering role. In addition to the ongoing weekly operational meetings that the Department held (and continues to hold) with Medibank Health Solutions (MHS), the Department met with MHS and Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia (RDVSA) on the following occasions between August and December 2016 to discuss implementation:

- Fifteen meetings held with MHS (16 August 2016, 17 August 2016, 17 August 2016 [follow up meeting], 18 August 2016, 19 August 2016, 22 August 2016, 23 August 2016, 28 September 2016, 5 October 2016, 18 October 2016, 26 October 2016, 9 November 2016, 24 November 2016, 29 November 2016, 9 December 2016)
- Two meetings with MHS and RDVSA (1 September 2016 and 13 October 2016)

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- Two Implementation Clinical Advisory Group (ICAG) meetings (3 August 2016 and 1 September 2016)
- Four meetings held with RDVSA (5 August 2016, 30 August 2016, 18 October 2016, and 5 December 2016).

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Question No: 4

Topic: 1800RESPECT

Hansard page: 44

Senator Singh asked:

What form did this brokering role take—in person, by email, on the phone? [*Senator McAllisters question “So from August 2016 to December 2016. What is the department's role in the negotiations that were taking place?”*]

Answer:

Please see response to QoN 3.

All meetings occurred in person, with the exception of 21 November 2016 and 9 December 2016 which occurred over the phone.

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Question No: 5

Topic: 1800RESPECT

Hansard page: 44

Senator Singh asked:

Since there has been this new contractual arrangement has the department, in requesting information or various detail from MHS, been faced with a situation where MHS said they couldn't provide the department with something because it is commercial in confidence?

Dr Baxter: When you say 'the new contractual arrangements', are you talking about the implementation of the first response or are you talking about the much more recent new panel arrangements?

Senator SINGH: Either/or, to be honest.

Answer:

Since the new contractual arrangements, MHS has provided the department with information on all requested matters.