

**Senate Community Affairs References Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 1

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** CA77 – 21 Apr

**Senator Siewert** asked:

Can you please provide the specific examples explaining the reasons why the 12 grants are not yet executed.

**Answer:**

As at 27 April 2015, there are nine grant agreements that are not yet executed with the status summarised below:

- The Department is in negotiations with one organisation regarding the terms and conditions within their grant agreement. This agreement remains unexecuted while the Department and organisation continue engaging in discussions;
- Two grant agreements have recently been signed by the organisations and are expected to be received by the Department and executed soon;
- There remains six grants that have not yet been executed related to the Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grant (ACSIHAG) programme. These are capital works grants which require specially prepared capital grant agreements, and the Department is currently in negotiations with the organisations. These grants are not related to front line service delivery and are therefore not time critical.

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**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 2

**Topic:** Nous review

**Hansard page:** CA78 – 21 Apr

**Senator Siewert** asked:

Can you provide the terms of reference for the Nous review?

**Answer:**

The terms of the review are attached.

<p><b>Work specification for the Services</b></p>	<p>The service provider will assess current project management processes for the grants selection process and provide expertise to establish an in-house project management capability that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confirmation / activation of programme governance arrangements</li> <li>• overall programme planning and design</li> <li>• clear accountability for who is delivering activities</li> <li>• development of mechanisms for the identification and mitigation of risks and issues</li> <li>• milestone tracking and reporting arrangements</li> <li>• timelines and schedules, incorporating critical path activities and dates</li> <li>• escalation processes and other project management processes that will ensure effective and timely delivery of your outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 1 – Program set up / Receipt of applications</b></p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish program governance</li> <li>• Shape program design by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confirming existing work</li> <li>○ Identifying projects of work/activity</li> <li>○ Develop project plan and critical path</li> <li>○ Identify interdependencies</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Confirm accountability requirements</li> <li>• Establish risk register, conduct high level risk assessment and mitigation strategies</li> <li>• Confirm escalation processes</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 2 – Assessment of applications</b></p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene program review meeting</li> <li>• Assess Phase 1 progress</li> <li>• Review project plan</li> <li>• Recalibrate project activities and timing (as required)</li> <li>• Review project risks</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 3 – Finalise agreements</b></p> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene program review meeting</li> <li>• Assess Phase 2 progress</li> <li>• Review project plan</li> <li>• Recalibrate project activities and timing (as required)</li> <li>• Review project risks</li> <li>• Further analysis on the finalisation of funding rounds and detailed consideration on Programme Office operating model</li> </ul>
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**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 3

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** CA80 – 21 Apr

**Senator Siewert** asked:

Can you please provide the names of stakeholders the department has met with throughout this year to talk through the grants process and when you met with them?

**Answer:**

The list below shows the meetings between stakeholders and DSS Senior Executives (specifically those witnesses at the hearing on 21 April 2015) regarding the grants process since 1 January 2015. This list shows meetings that occurred both in person, and via teleconference.

In the course of its business, representatives at all levels from the Department have met, and continue to meet, with stakeholders to discuss a variety of issues. These issues include the outcomes of the grants round, the implementation of grant agreements, future directions for policy development and to receive feedback regarding the selections process.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Stakeholder Organisation</b>	<b>Stakeholder Representatives</b>
06.01.15	Playgroup Australia	Anne-Marie Mioche
06.01.15	Australian Council of Social Services	Dr Cassandra Goldie
12.01.15	Lebanese Muslim Association	Samier Dandan
19.01.15	Anglicare	Roland Manderson
20.01.15	Australian Council of Social Services	Dr Cassandra Goldie and Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine
04.02.15	Family and Relationship Services Australia	Jackie Brady
05.02.15	Families Australia	Brian Babington
09.02.15	Playgroup Australia	Anne-Maree Mioche
10.02.15	Financial Counselling Australia	Fiona Guthrie and Carmel Franklin
11.02.15	Forrester's	Sandra Nugent and Ashley Hood

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**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Stakeholder Organisation</b>	<b>Stakeholder Representatives</b>
11.02.15	Volunteering Australia	Brett Williamson and Rikki Blacka
12.02.15	Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS)	Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine
13.02.15	Playgroup Australia	Anne-Maree Mioche
13.02.15	Good Shepherd Microfinance	Adam Mooney
16.02.15	Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust	Joe Zabar, Chris Grover and Anne Cross
17.02.15	UnitingCare Australia	Joe Zabar
17.02.15	Salvation Army	Dr Kelvin Alley and Joanne Paull
18.02.15	ANZ	Michelle Commandeur and Tobias Warren
18.02.15	Brotherhood St Lawrence	Christine Morka, Tony Robinson and Marina Tsianakas
18.02.15	The Benevolent Society	Paul Harkin and Cate Lyons-Crew
18.02.15	Berry Street	Patrice Jackson and Peter Grey
18.02.15	The Smith Family	Wendy Field and Cheryl Allen-Ankins
19.02.15	Volunteering WA	Mara Basanovic
23.02.15	The Salvation Army	Netty Horton, Rob Stevens, Pamela Hanney and Janet Saltenberg
04.03.15	Relationships Australia	Alison Brook and CEO's
05.03.15	Relationships Australia (WA)	Terri Reilly
05.03.15	National Australia Bank	Corinne Proske
05.03.15	ANZ	Michelle Commandeur
05.03.15	Good Shepherd Microfinance	Adam Mooney
06.03.15	UnitingCare Australia	Joe Zabar
10.03.15	Australian Council of Social Services	Dr Cassandra Goldie

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**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Stakeholder Organisation</b>	<b>Stakeholder Representatives</b>
10.03.15	Many Rivers	John Burn
13.03.15	Playgroups Australia	Anne-Marie Mioche
17.03.15	Good Shepherd Microfinance	Adam Mooney and Michelle Crawford
17.03.15	ASIC	Lisa Summers
19.03.15	Mirabel Foundation	Nicole Patton
19.03.15	Anglicare	Roland Manderson
23.03.15	UnitingCare	Lin Hatfield Dodds
24.03.15	Catholic Social Services	Various Staff
25.03.15	Family and Relationship Services Australia	Jackie Brady
01.04.15	Family Relationship Services Australia	Jackie Brady
01.04.15	Australian Council of Social Services	Dr Cassandra Goldie and Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine
16.04.15	Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust	Chris Grover
21.04.15	Catholic Social Services Australia	Sue Ludwig, Sheree Limbrick and Kylie Burgess

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**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 4

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** CA80 – 21 Apr

**Senator Siewert** asked:

How much will the review undertaken by Nous cost?

**Answer:**

The component identified within the Department's contract with Nous to undertake the review is \$90,000 (GST exclusive).

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**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 5

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** CA83 - 21 Apr

**Senator Bilyk** asked:

Does the report that recommends five weeks as being best practice for the submission of grant tenders take into account multiple tenders and multiple rounds or just the one tender?

**Answer:**

The Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs) stipulate that officials should use the proportionality principle to inform the choice of the application process.

Proportionality in grants administration involves striking an appropriate balance between the complexity of a granting activity, including the ongoing requirements for the grant recipients, and managing the risks for beneficiaries and the Commonwealth.

The five-week period was chosen to provide the necessary balance of:

- providing service providers time to become familiar with the new programme arrangements before they were required to prepare and submit their applications; and
- having the new grant arrangements in place as quickly as possible, so that clients could benefit from the *New Way of Working*.

A five-week application period is consistent with other Commonwealth and state and territory government grant application periods.

- This includes grants advertised by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet for the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (a funding round with multiple programme outcomes) and the ACT Government for their Health and Community Wellbeing Grants.

Although the proportionality principle does not specify requirements for single or multiple rounds, the Department conducted information sessions across Australia to inform the sector of the application period, communicate the Department's expectations of our funded providers and the broader Departmental objectives that would inform selection criteria.



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**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 6

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** CA84 – 21 Apr

**Senator Bilyk** asked:

What approach did Volunteering Tasmania make to the Department and what information was provided to them?

**Answer:**

On 2 February 2015 Volunteering Tasmania emailed enquiring about the future of their regional funding from the Department of Social Services.

In summary, the Department's response on 17 February 2015:

- provided information on the four applications lodged as part of the 2014 Volunteer Management funding round; and
- confirmed that two of the four applications lodged had been successful and that a funding agreement was attached with revised service areas following the Departmental review.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 7

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** CA85 - 21 Apr

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

Are 'Able Services' and 'Independent Health Care Services' the same organisation?

**Answer:**

Able Australia Services and Independent Health Care Service are separate organisations:

Able Australia Services (ABN: 83 024 339 234)

<http://ablenew.epublisher.com.au/>

Independent Health Care Service Pty Ltd (ABN: 75 057 369 669)

<http://independenthealth.com.au/>

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**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** 4

**Question No:** 8

**Topic:** Funding changes to housing organisations

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

In addition to the three housing and homelessness peak bodies, what other housing organisations or entities or individuals had their funding contracts terminated or not renewed?

**Answer:**

The Department of Social Services' agreement with the Australian Government Department of Finance for the provision of the Australian Homelessness Clearinghouse is to be terminated two years early, effective from 30 June 2015.

Excluding the three housing and homelessness peak bodies and the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (refer to question 9), the remaining agreements will expire as per the terms of the agreement, on 30 June 2015.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** 4

**Question No:** 9

**Topic:** Housing organisations which continue to receive funding and alternative sources of funding

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk** asked:

Who did receive funding or is continuing to be funded? If there were successful organisations, how much funding did they receive and for what period? If the Government has ceased funding the Housing and Homelessness Programme effective 1 July 2015, where is the funding coming from to fund these organisations/entities/individuals?

**Answer:**

The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) will receive \$4,048,125.40 (GST excl) from the Australian Government over three years to 30 June 2017. This is the only organisation that will continue to receive funding under the Housing and Homelessness Programme beyond 30 June 2015.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 10

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

How many staff were dedicated to the development of the Housing and Homelessness Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity grants program? This would include developing the four areas of activity, permissible activities, selection criteria, etc.

**Answer:**

It is not possible to disaggregate the number of staff dedicated to the development of the Housing and Homelessness Service Improvement and Sector Support Activity (HHSISS) grants programme as the staff were engaged in multiple number of activities including the development of the HHSISS programme.

**Senate Community Affairs References Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 11

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

How many staff hours were spent on developing the process, the forms, the selection criteria, etc?

**Answer:**

It is not possible to disaggregate staff hours as staff have a multiple number of responsibilities in addition to those listed in the question.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 12

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

How many applications were submitted for the HHSISS programme? What was the total amount of applications?

**Answer:**

216

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**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 13

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

What was the cost for the development of the HHSISS program, including staff costs, IT cost, outside consultants, etc.

**Answer:**

It is not possible to disaggregate costs for the development of the HHSISS programme as the staff, IT and outside consultants were utilised across a broad range of activities including the development of the HHSISS programme.



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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 14

**Topic:** DSS Grant Process

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

How many staff were dedicated to the application process? This includes Help desk staff, staff to process the applications, financial staff to undertake due diligence on the budget figures and assess the audits applicants were required to submit.

**Answer:**

There was an average of 104 FTE over a 12 week period commencing 28 July to 18 October 2014 working within the Assessment Centre to manage the selection process across 26 grant funding rounds.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 15

**Topic:** DSS Grant Process

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

1. How much did it cost in staff hours?
2. Were outside consultants brought in to help with the work load?

**Answer:**

1. There was an average of 104 FTE over a 12 week period commencing 28 July to 18 October 2014 working within the Assessment Centre to manage the selection process across 26 grant funding rounds.
2. No.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Outcome 4

**Question No:** 16

**Topic:** Decision to cease funding

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

On the decision to terminate funding, who made the decision? Was the decision made outside of DSS? Was it a Ministerial or Departmental decision? Who was consulted in DSS and the Housing Branch? Was there an opportunity for you to influence the decision?

**Answer:**

The decision to cease funding was made by the Government in the context of the Mid-year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO).

**Senate Community Affairs References Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Outcome 4

**Question No:** 17

**Topic:** Funding

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

Were organisations whose funding was terminated consulted before the decision was made?

**Answer:**

The decision to cease funding was made by the Government in the context of the Mid-year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO), and it was not the subject of external consultations.

**Senate Community Affairs References Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Outcome 4

**Question No:** 18

**Topic:** Funding

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

Were organisations who had longer term contracts made aware that their contracts were in jeopardy, that a termination of their contracts was likely? Were they consulted prior to the decision to terminate?

**Answer:**

The decision to cease funding was made by the Government in the context of the Mid-year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO), and it was not the subject of external consultations.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** 4

**Question No:** 19

**Topic:** DSS groups, branches and sections responsible for housing and homelessness policy

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

What groups, branches, and sections in DSS have responsibility for housing and homelessness policy now?

**Answer:**

The Housing, Homelessness and Assurance Group has primary responsibility for housing and homelessness policy in the Department of Social Services. The Group is supported in this work by other groups, branches and sections across the Department, as necessary.

Within this group, responsibility lies with two branches, the Housing and Homelessness Branch, and the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) and Gambling Branch.

The Housing and Homelessness Branch has four sections; Housing Programmes and Homelessness, Housing Policy, Housing Payments and Housing and Homelessness Data and Analysis.

The NRAS and Gambling Branch has three sections with housing and homelessness-related activities; NRAS Compliance and Audit Review, NRAS Account and Stakeholder Management and NRAS Policy, Budget and Regulation.

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**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Outcome 4

**Question No:** 20

**Topic:** Staffing

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

What is the breakdown of these in terms of number of staff in each team or branch, e.g. NRAS team, CRA team, housing policy team etc.

**Answer:**

As at 30 April 2015, there were 66.41 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff (including Senior Executive Service) working on housing and homelessness matters in the Housing, Homelessness and Assurance Group.

The number of staff by each team (including SES) is as follows:

- Housing, Homelessness and Assurance Group Executive – 3.72 FTE
- NRAS and Gambling Branch Executive – 2 FTE
- Compliance and Audit Review Team – 1 FTE
- NRAS Systems, Payments and Data – 21.8 FTE
- NRAS Account and Stakeholder Management – 6.8 FTE
- NRAS Policy, Budget and Deregulation – 8.13 FTE
- Housing and Homelessness Branch Executive – 1 FTE
- Housing Policy – 5.83 FTE
- Homelessness, Policy and Programme – 6.33 FTE
- Housing Payments – 5.8 FTE
- Housing and Homelessness Data and Analysis – 4 FTE

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**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Outcome 4

**Question No:** 21

**Topic:** Staffing

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

How many front line (i.e. non Senior Executive Service) staff are employed in each of these teams? (In other words, if there are 30 staff overall, but 20 of them are administering NRAS, that means that only a maximum of 10 will actually be working on policy.

**Answer:**

As at 30 April 2015, there were 63.41 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff (excluding Senior Executive Service) working on housing and homelessness matters in the Housing, Homelessness and Assurance Group.

The number of staff by each team (excluding SES) is as follows:

- Housing, Homelessness and Assurance Group Executive – 2.72 FTE
- NRAS and Gambling Branch Executive – 1 FTE
- Compliance and Audit Review Team – 1 FTE
- NRAS Systems, Payments and Data – 21.8 FTE
- NRAS Account and Stakeholder Management – 6.8 FTE
- NRAS Policy, Budget and Deregulation – 8.13 FTE
- Housing Policy - 5.83 FTE
- Homelessness, Policy and Programme – 6.33 FTE
- Housing Payments – 5.8 FTE
- Housing and Homelessness Data and Analysis – 4 FTE



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**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number: 4**

**Question No: 22**

**Topic: Staffing**

**Hansard page: Written**

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

What is the breakdown for the above three questions 12 months ago, two years ago, and three years ago?

**Answer:**

The Department is unable to provide the level of detail requested in the time permitted.

The Department provided staffing advice to the Senate Economics Reference Committee Inquiry into Affordable Housing on 23 February 2015 (refer to QoN 9).

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**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Outcome 4

**Question No:** 23

**Topic:** Homelessness staff

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

Is there a dedicated homelessness team? Did there used to be? How many people worked on homelessness (1, 2, and 3 years ago)? Is there a dedicated team working on the next National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness?

**Answer:**

The Department is unable to provide the level of detail requested in the time permitted. The number of staff working on homelessness and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness varies over time.

To assist the Committee the Department notes the Housing and Homelessness Branch is responsible for homelessness matters, including the next National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. This Branch had 22.96 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff as at April 2015.

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**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Outcome 4

**Question No:** 24

**Topic:** Community housing policy

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

Is there a dedicated community housing team? Did there used to be? How many people worked on community housing policy?

**Answer:**

The Housing and Homelessness Branch in the Housing, Homelessness and Assurance Group is responsible for community housing related issues. There number of staff working on community housing policy varies over time.

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**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number: 4**

**Question No: 25**

**Topic: COAG**

**Hansard page: Written**

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

How many staff were involved in supporting the COAG Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness?

**Answer:**

As at the last COAG Select Council on Housing and Homelessness meeting in March 2013, there were 4.36 Full Time Equivalent staff (not including the Senior Executive Service) providing secretariat support.

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**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Outcome 4

**Question No:** 26

**Topic:** Funding

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

Now that the COAG standing committee is gone, and with it the Housing Ministers' Advisory Council and the Policy and Research Working Group that sat beneath it, what mechanisms exist for coordination and collaboration between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments regarding housing and homelessness policy development?

**Answer:**

Senior Commonwealth and State and Territory Government officials continue to meet to address shared business needs.

Additionally, a Housing and Homelessness Chief Executives Network has been established as an informal network and has met face-to-face and by teleconference.

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**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Cross

**Question No:** 27

**Topic:** DSS Grants Process

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

Given that there was little or no specific selection criteria available to applicants for HHSISS funds, what internal criteria did DSS plan to use to assess the hundreds of applications it received?

**Answer:**

The *Housing & Homelessness Service Improvement & Sector Support Guidelines Overview (May 2014)*, the *Housing and Homelessness Service Improvement and Sector Support Funding Summary (June 2014)*, and the Application Form were published on the Department's website.

These documents outline the following Selection Criteria for the Housing and Homelessness Service Improvement and Sector Support funding round:

1. Demonstrate your understanding of the need for the funded Activity in any identified community/ communities and/or for any identified target group/s.
2. Describe how the implementation of your proposal will achieve the Activity objectives for all stakeholders, including value for money within the Grant funding.
3. Demonstrate your experience in effectively developing, delivering, managing and monitoring Activities to achieve Activity objectives for all stakeholders.
4. Demonstrate your organisation's capacity and your staff capability (experience and qualifications) to deliver the Activity objectives in any identified community/ communities and/or for any identified target group/s.

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**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number:** Outcome 4

**Question No:** 28

**Topic:** Funding

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

What was the indicative amount of funding per project within the HHSISS funding? What was the distribution of the \$21 million across the four priority areas? How much of that money was already contractually committed to funded organisations and/or projects?

**Answer:**

The allocation of funding was to be dependent on successful applications.

The organisations that had existing funding were:

- Community Housing Federation Australia – \$325,000 (GST exclusive) in 2015-16;
- National Shelter– \$150,000 (GST exclusive) in 2015-16; and
- Australian Government Department of Finance – \$4,500 (GST exclusive) in 2015-16.

The funding for the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute will continue until 30 June 2017 (\$1,349,198.78 in 2015-16, and \$1,376,182.70 in 2016-17).

**Senate Community Affairs References Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**Inquiry into the impact on service quality, efficiency and sustainability of recent Commonwealth community service tendering processes by the Department of Social Services.**

**Outcome Number: 4**

**Question No: 29**

**Topic:** DSS engagement mechanisms with the housing and homelessness sector

**Hansard page:** Written

**Senator Bilyk asked:**

With the termination of all funded housing and homelessness peak bodies, what mechanisms will DSS now use to engage with the housing and homelessness sector?

**Answer:**

Departmental officials will continue to engage with representatives of the housing and homelessness sector on both a formal and informal basis.