

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS—MAY 2017

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman

Outcome/Program:

Outcome 1. Fair and accountable administrative action by Australian Government entities and prescribed private sector organisations, by investigating complaints, reviewing administrative action and statutory compliance inspections and reporting.

Topic: Defence Force Ombudsman

Senator: Senator Kakoschke-Moore

Question reference number: 22

Type of question: FPA Committee – 22 May 2016

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 7 July 2017

Number of pages: 2

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: One of the issues with the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce (DART) was the two cut-offs being applied to victims—the first in relation to when abuse occurred and the second in relation to the deadline by which it had to be reported. I would strongly caution against any deadlines being applied, but that is something for you to consider. In terms of the framework, that will consider eligibility requirements and the amount of reparation that can be paid?

Mr R Walsh: That is right.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Are you able to give any indication, at this stage, as to what the maximum payments amounts would be under the scheme?

Mr R Walsh: We only have an estimate from the budget measures, which is \$19.5 million over four years from 2017-18. Beyond that, no.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Do you know how that amount was arrived at?

Mr R Walsh: No.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Have you sought that information?

Mr R Walsh: No.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Will you?

Mr R Walsh: No.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: In your framing of the eligibility criteria, will you be doing any modelling about how many people you expect to come forward to make claims under the scheme?

Mr R Walsh: Yes.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Will the results of that modelling be publicly available?

Mr R Walsh: Could I take that on notice, perhaps? It is very early days. I think it would be unfair to speculate.

Mr Manthorpe: And we are working with the other relevant agencies, so we do not want to commit to either an outcome or provision of information that is subject to discussions with them. But we will bear in mind your request.

Questions:

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE:

1. In your framing of the eligibility criteria, will you be doing any modelling about how many people you expect to come forward to make claims under the scheme?
2. Will the results of that modelling be publicly available?

Answer:

The eligibility criteria for the announced reparation payment, and the associated budget, is a matter for government. The Office is working with the Department of Defence as part of this process, including drawing on the experience of the DART to determine the most accurate estimate of abuse report numbers.