

## **Question on notice no. 21**

**Portfolio question number: BE18/180**

### **2018-19 Budget estimates**

#### **Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Home Affairs Portfolio**

**Senator Nick McKim:** asked the Department of Home Affairs on 12 June 2018—

3. What is the average annual cost of supporting a single person without children on a bridging visa in the community through the SRSS program?

4.1 How many people on the SRSS program were exited since 1 August 2017 and 27 February 2017, for reasons other than that a decision was made on their protection claim? Please provide a breakdown by State/Territory, age ranges, and which bands they were on.

4.2 As at 27 February 2017, how many of those on Band 6 were single adult males or females? How many of those have been identified by service providers as not being 'vulnerable', according to the Department's criteria? Please provide a breakdown by State/Territory, nationality and age range.

4.3 As at 27 February 2017, how many family units are there in Band 6 of the SRSS program? Please provide a breakdown by State/Territory, age ranges and nationality.

4.4 As at 27 February 2017, how many people were on SRSS, by type of Bridging Visa class (Bridging Visa A-E) ?

4.5 When is the Department expecting that single people will be exited from SRSS as a result of the redesign, and when is the Department expecting that families will be exited from SRSS as a result of the redesigned model?

4.6 When does the Department expect to make a primary decision of all those left in the Legacy Caseload? What is the current rate of decisions monthly?

4.7 The Department has advised that people will not be eligible for SRSS if they have transferred \$1000 cumulatively over a 12-month period, including domestic transfers. How is the Department monitoring domestic transfers, and what process does it undergo to ensure such transfers aren't legitimately made (for example, a combined rental payment for a transfer?)

4.8 Can the Department confirm the criteria provided to SRSS providers for reassessing clients on the SRSS Program? Can the Department confirm that a pregnant woman will not be considered vulnerable enough to remain in the SRSS program, and be expected to find work?

4.9 Can the Department confirm that couples with children under six are not considered vulnerable enough to remain in the SRSS program? Has the Department consulted with the National Children's Commissioner as to the effects of this policy?

4.10 Can the Department clarify whether someone who does meet the Department's vulnerability criteria (for example, a woman experiencing domestic violence) would still be ineligible under the earlier policy changes in August 2017 (for example, she has transferred more than \$1000 cumulatively over a year) ?

4.11 Can the Department confirm that, even when a service provider identifies a person as vulnerable under the Department's criteria, that the Department will make the final determination? Is there a policy as to how the Department will make these determinations? Will the determination be made by the Chief Medical Officer, given this position does not appear yet to have been filled by a medical professional?

4.12 Will people exiting the SRSS program be given any form of job assistance?

4.13 Do people on the SRSS program have access to government-funded English, employment or educational courses?

4.14 How many days' notice will people be given before losing income support?

4.15 Is the SRSS contract based on a demand-driven model, depending on the number of clients? If so, what is the cost paid under the contract for a single client on each Band?

4.16 Do the current SRSS contracts compensate providers for

- (1) conducting vulnerability assessments or
- (2) assisting clients with applications?

4.17 What were the total costs paid under the SRSS contract to providers in the past four financial years?

4.18 Under the current SRSS contracts, are caseworkers required to have qualifications in

- (1) mental health
- (2) physical health, or
- (3) facilitating employment? What is the value of the extensions of the SRSS contract from 30 June 2018?

4.19 Under the redesign of the SRSS, are there

- (1) any ratios of clients to caseworkers and
- (2) any requirements for a caseworker to have face-to-face contact with a client?

4.20 Under the redesign of the SRSS, will all clients be given some form of income support or housing?

4.21 What internal advice and consultation was there within the Department about the impact of removing financial support on the resolution of their cases?

4.22 Were State governments consulted or advised about this policy change, given the implications for State and Territory health, housing and police services?

**Answer —**

1. The Department of Home Affairs (the Department) does not capture information in the finance system based on a recipient's family status.

2. The Department does not record detailed reasons for exiting the program.

3. As at 27 February 2017, there were 8,697 single adults in Band 6.

4. As at 27 February 2017, there were 3,522 family groups on SRSS band 6.

Breakdown for Age, Nationality and state/territory:

Table 1: SRSS Band 6 – Persons in family groups by Age Range as at COB 27 February 2017.

Age Range	Total
0-25 Years	5,798
26-45 years	4,381
46+	842

Note: Figures are based on data recorded in Departmental systems as at 28 February 2017. Figures change daily due to the granting of TPVs/SHEVs and people being found to be finally determined.

Table 2: SRSS Band 6 – Persons in family groups by state as at COB 27 February 2017.

State	Total
ACT	106
N/A	<5
NSW	3,314
NT	21
QLD	1,276
SA	692
TAS	36
VIC	4,993
WA	580

Note: Figures are based on data recorded in Departmental systems as at 28 February 2017. Figures change daily due to the granting of TPVs/SHEVs and people being found to be finally determined.

Table 3: SRSS Band 6 – Persons in Family Groups by Top 10 Nationality as at COB 27 February 2017.

Nationality	Total
IRAN	3,971
SRI LANKA	1,761
STATELESS	1,476
IRAQ	605
AFGHANISTAN	438
PAKISTAN	326
VIETNAM	262
MYANMAR	223
LIBYA	216
LEBANON	160
OTHER	1,583

Note: Figures are based on data recorded in Departmental systems as at 28 February 2017.

#### 5. Breakdown of Bridging Visa classes:

Table 4: SRSS Bands 1-6 by Bridging Visa Class as at COB 27 February 2017.

Bridging Visa	Total
BVE - A	1,506
BVE - B	13
BVE - C	463
BVE - D	0
BVE - E	17,913

Note: Figures are based on data recorded in Departmental systems as at 28 February 2017.

#### 6. The Department individually reviews SRSS recipients.

7. The Department will resolve the remaining on-hand applications as efficiently as possible without compromising the integrity of the program or compromising on national security, noting that this is the largest immigration status resolution exercise the Department has undertaken in decades. 61.8 per cent of the IMA Legacy Caseload now have a primary decision or are otherwise resolved. Assessing this caseload is complex, particularly in relation to identity with a large number of IMAs arriving undocumented.

Monthly statistical information about the IMA Legacy Caseload is available on the Departmental website at: <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/reports-publications/research-statistics/statistics/live-in-australia/humanitarian-programme>.

8. Departmental records are crosschecked with AUSTRAC. Each case is assessed individually and rental or other legitimate payments may not disqualify a recipient.

9. Eligibility focusses on an individual's vulnerabilities and barriers including physical and mental health concerns, along with any exceptional circumstances which may hinder an individual's self- agency and autonomy to engage in their status resolution process. Individuals' circumstances are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

10. If neither parent is able to work, due to other vulnerabilities or barriers, tailored support may be provided.

The Department has not consulted with the National Children's Commissioner.

11. Each individual is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

12. The Department makes the decision, considering all information available, including from the service provider.

13. Individuals are encouraged to participate in the Department of Jobs and Small Business' Jobactive program.

14. If an individual has demonstrated vulnerabilities or needs which present barriers to working or resolving their immigration status, and they meet the program eligibility requirements, they will be provided with tailored support under the SRSS program.

15. Recipients receive written notice prior to losing income support. Income support ceases 28 days after the date of notification.

16. SRSS contracts are based on the number of recipients within the SRSS Program. What is paid under the contract for a single client will vary significantly depending on individual circumstances and service contracts.

17. Contracts require service providers to assess SRSS recipient's vulnerabilities and needs, develop Case Plans and to make recommendations to the Department about any support requirements. Limited support may be provided by the SRSS Provider with status resolution related applications.

18. The total amounts paid under the SRSS in the past four financial years.

Table 5.

Period	\$'m
Jul 17 – Apr 18	232.9
2016-17	399.2

2015-16	536.8
2014-15	539.6
2013-14	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1708.4</b>

Note: These figures include SRSS program support, payments made direct to recipients on behalf of the Department by Department of Human Services and the cost of school based education of minors.

Note that the SRSS program commenced on 1 September 2014, the above figures may include amounts relating to prior arrangements during the transition process.

19. The SRSS Contract requires SRSS providers to recruit, train and roster personnel with appropriate skills and qualifications to perform and deliver the contract. Contracts have been extended from 1 July 2018 at a cost of \$139,917,397b (GST exclusive).

20. Providers must ensure they have adequate levels of personnel to perform and deliver the services required in accordance with the SRSS Contract. Caseworkers are required to have face-to-face contact with clients if clients need this service.

21. No. Support will match individual circumstances.

22. As per usual practice, a range of areas across the Department are regularly consulted on programs and their extension.

23. Regular communication materials are provided to departmental staff, service providers, Non-Government Organisations and state and territory government representatives.