

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-327

OUTCOME 6: Rural Health

Topic: RURAL HEALTH

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

The new agency Rural and Regional Health Australia was a Budget initiative (2011-2012). The then Health Minister Roxon wrote to me in November 2011 to inform me of this agency. It appears to be a 1800 number, email services and website. Budget paper No 2, p244 (see attached) contains no extra funding as the “cost of the measure will be met from within the existing resources of the Department of Health and Ageing”. In relation to this agency, please provide details including:

- a) How many existing resources of the Department have been used to provide this unit?
- b) Where is the unit located?
- c) How many staff does it have?
- d) How many calls have been made to the 1800 899 538 number?
- e) What is the breakdown of calls made during business hours and after hours?
- f) How many requests for information have been made by email?
- g) How much traffic has the website [www.ruralhealthaustralia.gov.au](http://www.ruralhealthaustralia.gov.au) received?
- h) How do you record the areas where inquiries originate, by telephone, email and on the website?
- i) Would you judge this service to be a success?
- j) What evaluation will be made and when?
- k) What will the evaluation cost?

Answer:

- a) A total of \$5.4 million over four years (2011-12 to 2014-15) was allocated for the establishment of Rural and Regional Health Australia (RRHA) through the reallocation of existing resources of the Department of Health and Ageing.
- b) The unit is physically located with the Central Office of Department of Health and Ageing in Canberra.
- c) The average staffing level is 52.6 staff across six teams.
- d) There have been 416 calls received in the period 1 July 2011 to 29 February 2012.
- e) All calls were received during business hours.
- f) There have been 79 emails received in the period 1 July 2011 to 29 February 2012.
- g) The Rural and Regional Health Australia website received 7203 visits in the period 1 July 2011 to 29 February 2012.
- h) The RRHA requests the state of origin, and profession of, all callers on a non-mandatory and anonymous basis. Due to the nature of electronic communication, information about the origin of contacts is not available for website and email services.
- i) RRHA seeks feedback from users of the information service on 1800 899 538, and to date 99.8 per cent of people have responded as 'satisfied' with their experience.
- j) An evaluation is not planned.
- k) N/A.