

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 13 & 15 February 2013

Question: E13-161

OUTCOME 4: Aged Care and Population Ageing

Topic: Home and Community Care Program

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Senator Di Natale

Question:

- a) In relation to the Department's Commonwealth Home and Community Care Program, I have received representations to the effect that larger organisations, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) organisations, have not had difficulty adapting to the changes, but that smaller CALD organisations with fewer resources have had difficulty adapting to the changed management style. How is the Department managing the changeover process between Commonwealth and State/Territory management of the HACC program?
- b) How many complaints have been received to date about the Commonwealth management of the HACC program? How many complaints have been received from smaller CALD organisations?
- c) How is the Department ensuring that small CALD community groups are not being disadvantaged by changed management arrangements?

Answer:

- a) The Commonwealth has worked closely with participating state and territory governments and other parties to implement the new Commonwealth Home and Community Care (HACC) Program arrangements and ensure a smooth transition for service providers, consumers and carers to ensure continuity of services for older people.

The Department of Health and Ageing has implemented robust stakeholder engagement and communication strategies to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the changes to the Commonwealth HACC Program and ensure they remain informed during the implementation of the new program.

- b) A feedback and complaints management process for the Commonwealth HACC Program is currently under development and is expected to be implemented in the coming months. The Department is not aware of any specific complaints at this time.

- c) The Commonwealth HACC Program is being delivered within the COAG agreed principles of no significant changes to service delivery before 1 July 2015.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds continue to be identified as a special needs group under the Commonwealth HACC Program. The National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from CALD Backgrounds was launched on 20 December 2012. The strategy is designed to support the aged care sector, including Commonwealth HACC Program service providers, to deliver the care and services appropriate and sensitive to the needs of older people from CALD backgrounds.

To support and guide providers, including CALD providers, through the transition and implementation phases of the Commonwealth HACC Program the Department has implemented a variety of communication tools. These include industry briefings on the transition for HACC providers, HACC forums in rural and regional Australia, as well as ongoing support through the HACC Service Provider Helpdesk.

The Department has also released the Transition Costs Funding Round for the Commonwealth HACC Program on 6 March 2013 to provide an opportunity for existing Commonwealth HACC Program service providers to apply for additional funding. Up to \$55 million (GST exclusive) in one-off funding is available through the Transition Costs Funding Round to support existing service providers undertake activities related to transitioning to the Commonwealth HACC Program.

The Commonwealth HACC Program has also reduced administrative burden for smaller organisations that receive annual funding of less than \$100,000 through reduced reporting requirements.