

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - 27 FEBRUARY 2014 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment, October 2013 NSW Bushfires

Question reference number: HS 9

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Hansard page 131

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 24 April 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator CAMERON: At the estimates hearing this week for the Attorney-General's Department, which was also justice department, I asked Mr Sheehan—he is the deputy secretary or whatever—about the issue of the payment for the moderately affected by the bushfire in the Blue Mountains, and where that was up to. I asked him if it was still under consideration. He said that, yes, on an ongoing basis it was. I asked him if he could provide details of the actions and activities and correspondence with the department associated with the review. He said he would take that on notice. He also said that the process for review involves the department doing a number of things. This is the Attorney-General's Department. He said:

We will be monitoring open source information. We will be talking to the New South Wales government, in this case—or any state government depending on the event. Any information that can be provided to us by other government departments—for example, the Bureau of Meteorology, the Department of Human Services, who have a front line role—

Given that people in the Blue Mountains have been told now for months—and this is now being said again by the justice department—that this issue is still under review, and they are saying that the Department of Human Services is one of the areas they rely on to get information on whether they should pay this, could you provide all correspondence from the Department of Human Services, between yourself and any of your officers and any of your staff to the justice department on the issue of the payment for the moderately affected, relating to the bushfires in the Blue Mountains?

Senator Payne: I will take that on notice.

Answer:

There has been no correspondence between the Minister and her staff and the Attorney-General's Department. Further, the department only provides service delivery advice to the Attorney-General's Department, but does not advise or comment on policy matters, such as whether or not a payment should be activated.