

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2013-14 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 3

Question No: 343

Topic: Financial Counselling

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

1. Please provide the total number of Australians accessing:
 - a) face-to-face
 - b) phone financial counselling services, from 1 July 2013 YTD.
2. What measures have been put in place to keep up with demand given the recent rise in the national unemployment rate to six per cent?

Answer:

1. Commonwealth Financial Counselling assisted 22,568 people through face to face counselling and 24,295 people over the phone in the period 1 July 2013 to 31 December 2014.
2. The Australian Government wants to make sure service providers can continue the critical work and services that they provide to families, children, communities and Australia's most vulnerable people, while making much needed, important changes to future grant funding arrangements.

The Department of Social Services is implementing new grant arrangements to provide civil society with greater flexibility to address service needs of individuals, families and communities.

The simplified arrangements establish the framework for the Department to move towards a single grant agreement per provider, implement new and improved financial reporting systems, reduce reporting and regulation, consolidate funding rounds and support greater service delivery innovation to meet the needs of clients.

The new programmes will ensure that service providers will have greater flexibility, less administrative burden and greater control over how they deliver services to the particular needs of their clients and communities.

Commonwealth Financial Counselling services will now be funded under the Families and Communities Programme through the Financial Wellbeing and Capability Activity. Further information is available on the Department's website: www.dss.gov.au/grants.