

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2014-15 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 3.3 Home Care

Question No: SQ15-000279

Topic: DHS – means and asset testing

Hansard page: Written

Senator Polley, Helen asked:

1. Has the Department of Human Services provided details about the benchmarks around the time frame for means and asset testing for people wishing to enter aged care?
Please provide details of the benchmarks.
2. What time frames do the Department of Social Services consider appropriate?
3. What role does the Department of Social Services play in ensuring aged care consumers receive accurate and timely assessments?
4. At what level does this occur? i.e.. Provide details of the staff involved in this process and their APS level?

Answer:

1. Yes. In situations where the care recipient is already known to DHS, and the required information has been made available, a simple means test is usually completed within 24-48 hours. Where further information is required, for example a valuation of assets, it can take up to four weeks or longer to complete from the time the application is lodged.
2. Appropriate service delivery timeframes are a matter for DHS.
3. DHS is responsible for delivery of means testing and associated payment functions. The two Departments have a Bilateral Management Arrangement that outlines areas of shared interest including service delivery. The performance of DHS is monitored through the Bilateral Management Arrangement.
4. Governance arrangements exist between the Departments that allow issues to be monitored and addressed quickly. Regular meetings are held between DHS and DSS involving a range of Executive, including the responsible Deputy Secretaries, and APS level staff.