

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2012-13 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 2

Question No: 326

Topic: Building Better Regional Cities Program

Hansard Page: Written

Senator McKenzie asked:

(1) The SEWPAC website says that ""The Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities is responsible for the management of the Building Better Regional Cities Program.""

(<http://www.environment.gov.au/housing/bbrc/index.html>)

Yet the FaHCSIA website says ""The Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs is responsible for the management of the Building Better Regional Cities Program.""

(<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/progserv/bbrc/Pages/default.aspx>).

(2) I understand FaHCSIA is actually responsible for managing the program. When did this change? Why? Has there been any confusion from potential applicants? What was the resolution of any confusion? Why wasn't the website updated?

(3) How were the included Local Governments chosen?

(4) How many applications have been received? Was there an application from every eligible local government? For what total amount?

(5) Were local governments provided any assistance by the department in preparing their applications?

Answer:

(1) The SEWPAC website has been updated to remove the reference to the Building Better Regional Cities program.

(2) There was a machinery of government change that moved responsibility for the program to FaHCSIA. This was effective from 14 December 2011. The change in administration has not had any impact on the applicants. All applications to the program were received while the program was with SEWPAC. Following the change all materials from the applications and staff working on the assessment were moved to FaHCSIA and the assessment continued uninterrupted.

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(3) Local Governments with urban area populations over 30,000 were eligible to apply for funding, with Mount Gambier in South Australia, and Burnie and Devonport in Tasmania included to reflect differences between states in the size and distribution of population.

(4) There were 43 applications received from 36 eligible local governments. The total level of funding sought in the applications received under the program was approximately \$330 million.

(5) In line with probity requirements any queries on process or how to complete the application form were responded to via the web site to allow all applicants equal access to the information. The Department did not assist individual councils with their applications.