

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 5-6 JUNE 2014 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: National Commission of Audit – Recommendation 60 to Outsource the Payment System

Question reference number: HS 175

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 25 July 2014

Number of pages: 3

Question:

The Department of Health has been allocated \$500,000 “to develop a proposal in consultation with the Department of Human Services to market test the delivery of a commercially integrated health payment system. Expressions of Interest will be sought from commercial providers to gauge interest in the proposal and to identify potential alternative approaches to the delivery of health payments.” (Budget Paper 2, page 132)

- a) Minister and Secretary, when did you each find out about the market testing measure in the Health portfolio budget?
- b) Is this measure a first step in implementing Recommendation 60 of the National Commission of Audit?
- c) What DHS administered payments are covered by the Department of Health proposal?
- d) How many staff in the Department of Human Services are currently involved in the delivery of those payments?
- e) How many staff are currently engaged in delivery of the Medicare payments system?
- f) Who initiated this budget measure: the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Finance or someone else, who?
- g) What issues would need to be addressed to implement NCOA Recommendation 60?
- h) Has DHS had discussions with Australia Post over its proposal outlined in the NCOA report (in some detail at Appendix Volume 2 page 216-217)?
- i) Does DHS hold a copy of the Australia Post submission to the NCOA?
- j) Does DHS agree with the Australia Post estimate that 5,000 staff would go from DHS under its proposal to deliver DHS services?
- k) Provide details of training to achieve skills and competency in delivering the day-to-day face-to-face functions outlined in the answer to Supplementary Estimates November 2013 QoN HS 4.

Answer:

- a) The Minister and Secretary both became aware of the initiative through the normal Budget development process.
- b) This question should be directed to the Department of Health.
- c) *Health Insurance Act 1973* – Medical Benefits; and *National Health Act 1953* – Pharmaceutical Benefits.
- d) Since integration in July 2011, data in relation to the previous master programmes is no longer maintained and to disaggregate and respond specifically in relation to employees involved in the delivery of these payments would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.
- e) See answer to (d).
- f) This question should be directed to the Department of Health.
- g) The NCOA recommendations are a matter for the Government’s consideration.
- h) No.
- i) No.
- j) Analysis of the Australia Post estimate has not been conducted by the department.
- k) The data below represents the total training investment for face to face operational staff¹ in the Service Delivery Operations Group during the last financial year to date (2013-14), captured² on the Learning Management System (LMS).

Total training attendances	139,144
Total number of courses accessed by staff	1,316

Most attended courses during the period

Course/Programme	Capability built through this training
myGov	Ability to support customers in the use of MyGov and the transition to self-managed services
Indigenous Cross Cultural Awareness	Skills and knowledge to improve service delivery to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities
Dealing with Customer Aggression	Ability to effectively manage customer aggression and create positive interactions with customers
Tell Us Once	Skills and knowledge to improve the way customer records are updated across departmental functions
Transition to Self-Managed Services	Understanding of the self-managed services within the department to better support customer transition

¹ Face to face operational staff is represented by all staff at the APS1 to EL2 levels who sit within Zones 1 to Zone 16 under the Service Delivery Operations Division.

² Data drawn from the Learning Management System on 20 June 2014, period covered is from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014.

Online Claims	Ability and knowledge to promote and assist customers with the range of online claims available
Privacy, Secrecy and Confidentiality	Awareness of departmental privacy requirements and connection to broader APS legislation
Australian Privacy Principles	Understanding of the reforms to the Privacy Act
Customer First	Necessary skills and knowledge to effectively use the Customer First system and support customers
Managing Work Health and Safety	Ability to effectively manage risk/s in relation to the Work, Health and Safety Act