

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 30 May 2017**

**Ref No:** SQ17-000923

**OUTCOME:** 6 - Ageing and Aged Care

**Topic:** Home Care Packages

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Griff, Stirling

**Question:**

- a) Regarding Home Care Packages: What happens to funds kept in credit in circumstances where a package holder dies? Does the provider keep any funds in credit or are they required to return it to the Department?
- b) If funds need to be returned, how does the Department verify that credited funds have all been returned?
- c) Is there a requirement for the provider to provide an itemised statement/final account to the executor of the deceased person's estate and/or the Department?

**Answer:**

- a) When a consumer passes away, the approved home care provider must calculate the amount of unspent funds remaining in the consumer's package and return the respective portions to the Commonwealth and the consumer's estate as follows:
  - The consumer portion must be returned to the consumer's estate within 14 days of the provider being shown the probate of the will or letters of administration; and
  - The Commonwealth portion is recovered by notifying the Commonwealth through the claims process within 70 days of care ceasing.
- b) Approved home care providers must retain records including the written notice of the consumer's unspent funds and records relating to the payment of a consumer's unspent funds to their estate.

Providers have a responsibility to return funds within the legislated timeframe. If this is not completed, the Department of Health can take regulatory action with the legislated introduction of sanctions. Non-compliance is identified through a range of sources, including consumer complaints raised with the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner.

- c) Yes. An itemised written notice of the consumer's unspent funds must be provided to the consumer's representative within 56 days of care ceasing.

