

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-293

OUTCOME 4: Aged Care and Population Ageing

Topic: CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE AGED CARE

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

In relation to one of the only two election commitments of the Labor Government's regarding "improving translation services for Australians in aged care". In relation to this announcement, please advise:

- a) The provisions and programs dealing with translation services in aged care before the announcement?
- b) The number of people accessing translation services?
- c) The languages accessed as part of the translation process?
- d) Any specific requirements on aged care providers in relation to translation and language services currently and additionally as a consequence of the new program?
- e) When did the Government first become aware of the deficiencies in its existing programs?
- f) Is it intended that the program be implemented at all aged care homes. If not, at which homes will the program be implemented and how have these homes been chosen?
- g) What staff training is proposed as part of this program?
- h) Will the Commonwealth fund the training or will providers have further obligations imposed on them. If so, will providers be responsible for the costs of additional training?

Answer:

- a) The Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program was established in 1997 and aims to equip aged care providers to deliver culturally appropriate care to older people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The Community Partners Program (CPP) was established in 2005 and aims to promote and facilitate increased and sustained access to aged care information and services by culturally and linguistically diverse communities with significant aged care needs. One of the roles of CPP organisations is to translate information brochures or aids.

- b) The Department provides information on how to access the Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS), which is a service provided by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, for people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

In addition, the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) has a directory of accredited practitioners who offer translating and interpreting services. Furthermore, both the Australian Multi Lingual Services and Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW provide on-site interpreting services.

The Department provides aged care information sheets, general information and factsheets in 18 different languages. However, the Department does not hold data on the number of people accessing translation services.

- c) As stated above there are many organisations that provide translating and interpreting services. One of roles of CPP organisations is to translate information brochures or aids as part of their CPP project. The languages that are accessible are Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese (simplified), Chinese (traditional), Croatian, Czech, Dutch, Farsi, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sinhalese, Slovak, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese.
- d) Under the *Aged Care Act 1997*, older people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background are identified as a special needs group. In addition, to accessing and benefiting from the same funding and services as their older people in the community, specific policies and programs, such as the CPP and PICAC program, have been designed to enhance the access of these older people to aged care services and information, as well as build capacity for aged care providers to deliver culturally appropriate care.

Furthermore, the *Aged Care Act 1997*, Schedule 4: Community Care Standards requires each care recipient and prospective care recipient to have access to information to assist in making an informed choice about available community care services. Community care services providers are required to provide each care recipient with information to assist them to make service choices, and to gain an understanding of the services available to them and their rights and responsibilities.

Under the *Quality of Care Principles 1997*, care and services are to be provided to all residents who need them; such as, addressing difficulties arising from people who lack the common language.

- e) People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds make up to 15 per cent of residents in aged care homes, and are expected to increase as the population ages. A report released in 2001 by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare states by 2026, the older overseas-born population from CALD backgrounds is projected to number 939,800 people, or 21.2 per cent of the total older Australian population.
- f) The Government is currently considering implementation plans for this program.
- g) Cultural awareness training for aged care providers is conducted through the PICAC organisations and typically this training consists of seminars, workshops, and information and education sessions on culturally appropriate care in aged care services. This measure expands the availability of training.
- h) The Department funds the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care organisations to provide training to staff of aged care residential facilities and to community based aged care services at no additional cost to the aged care provider.