

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 18 OCTOBER 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Grants Pause

Question reference number: HS 126

Senator: Boyce

Type of question: Written question

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 December 2012

Number of pages: 3

Question:

- a) To date, how much of the 2012-13 budget appropriations has your department received?
- b) For 2012-13 please list each grant program your department administers, and the total funding of each program.
- c) Please list each grant program that has not been paused as part of the Government wide grants pause.
- d) Please provide the total cash value of each program that has not been paused?
- e) Please list each grant program that has currently been "paused" as part of the Government wide grants pause.
- f) Please provide the total cash value of each program that has been paused, and the total value of all grants paused?
- g) On what date did your department receive advice from the government to pause certain grants programs?
 - 1) How was the instruction received, and from whom was it received?
- h) Please list the dates the Minister for Finance met with senior department officials to discuss the grants pause and the Minister overseeing your department met with senior department officials
- i) From what date was your department told to implement the grants pause?
 - 1) When did it do so?
- j) Has your department been provided with information regarding when the grants pause would end?
 - 1) If so, what was the date?
 - 2) Was your department advised if it could communicate when the grants pause would end to grant applicants?
- k) Please provide the advice your department gave to Department of Finance regarding which programs should be included in the grants pause.
- l) Did your department receive advice/instruction from the Department of Finance regarding how best to communicate the grants pause to grant applicants, the media and other external stakeholders?

- m) What information has been provided to grant applicants regarding the grants pause? Please provide scripts if these have been given to call centres, or any other information sheets which have been used internally for discussing the grants pause with applicants.
- n) Has your department been advised by the Department of Finance of further grants pauses in the future? If so
 - 1) When did you receive notification of future grants pauses?
 - 2) What is the date of future grants to be paused
 - 3) Which grants programs will be paused?
 - 4) What is total value of pauses in future grants programs?
 - 5) When will notification of these future grants pauses be made public?
- o) How many staff are employed to administer grant programs within the department?
- p) During the Grants Pause what activities are these staff involved with?
 - 1) Have staff been moved to other divisions during the grants pause?
- q) During the Grants Pause are decisions on grants being made, but applicants not being alerted?

Answer:

- a) Appropriation information is reported in the 2012-13 Portfolio Budget Statements. Appropriation information will be updated in the Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.
- b) Information on grants awarded by the Department of Human Services (including grant programs) is published on the Department's website. Guidelines and information on rounds of grant programs are also published on the website. Information on the Department's funding, including grants, can be found in the 2012-13 Portfolio Budget Statements.
- c) On 27 August 2012, the Government decided to pause all grant rounds for 2012-13 which were not advertised, and advertised rounds which were not finalised. Providing the list of grant programs that were not paused could disclose the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet's deliberations and therefore is not publicly available.
However, information on grant programs, in general, can be found on agencies' websites.
Information on the outcome of the grants pause is reported in the 2012-13 MYEFO, and in the Finance Minister's media release of 22 October 2012.
- d) Refer to answer (c).
Information on the outcome of the grants pause is reported in the 2012-13 MYEFO, and in the Finance Minister's media release of 22 October 2012.
- e) Refer to answer (c).
Information on the grant programs that had uncommitted grants funding reduced can be found in the Finance Minister's media release of 22 October 2012.
- f) Refer to answer (c).
- g) On 28 August 2012, the Department of Finance and Deregulation released an Estimate Memorandum informing portfolio departments of the grants pause and seeking information on grant rounds and programs in 2012-13 which were not advertised, and advertised rounds which were not finalised.

h) The Minister for Finance and Deregulation did not meet with Department of Human Services senior officials and the Minister for Human Services did not meet with senior Department officials to discuss the grant pause.

i) On 28 August 2012, the Department of Finance and Deregulation released an Estimate Memorandum informing agencies of the decision by the Government to pause grant rounds.

The grant pause was implemented as per the decision of the Government.

j) The pause on grant programs ended with the release of the 2012-13 MYEFO. The outcome of the Government's decision was reported in the 2012-13 MYEFO and the Finance Minister's media release of 22 October 2012.

Agencies were advised on 22 October 2012 they could communicate the end of the grants pause.

k) The information the Department provided to Finance included grant rounds, committed funds, purpose of the grant and recipients of the grants. This information informed the briefing to the Cabinet's Expenditure Review Committee and therefore is not publicly available.

l) Finance provided standard talking points to all Portfolio Departments to use as necessary.

Refer to Attachment A of the answers to the Department of Finance and Deregulation's questions F36 and F38.

m) During the grants pause, the Department was between funding rounds for the Local Solutions Fund, therefore no information was provided.

n) No.

1) Not applicable.

2) Not applicable.

3) Not applicable.

4) Not applicable.

5) Not applicable.

o) Approximately six staff have components of the grants administration as part of their overall responsibilities.

p) Staff involved in grants administration also have other areas of responsibility. During the pause they continued to administer the previous round, to refine processes for the subsequent rounds and to carry out the other duties for which they were responsible.

No staff were moved to other divisions.

q) No decisions directly related to forthcoming grants were made.