

## Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 21 NOVEMBER 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Department of Human Services

**Topic:** Capability Review, Future Jobs Plan, National Commission of Audit

**Question reference number:** HS 75

**Senator:** Cameron

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 24 January 2014

**Number of pages:** 3

#### **Question:**

- a) Do you agree with the summary assessment of the Australian Public Service Commission in its August, 2012 report that the organisation has many strengths including – exceptional performance and reliability, significant crisis response capability, successful implementation of change over its first 12 months, exciting and innovative practices, a workforce who operates with conviction commitment, a highly capable secretary?
- b) What steps are being taken to ensure that the recognition by the Australian Public Service Commission of the Department's capacity to operate innovatively, driven by the desire make people's lives better and to become more efficient is maintained?
- c) Do you believe the Department provides value for money as it undertakes its role and obligations as outlined in Outcome 1?
- d) Can you advise if you have identified any programs or areas of work where you believe it is inappropriate to continue?
- e) What steps are you taking to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery within the Department?
- f) Are there areas of unnecessary duplication between the activities of your department and other levels of government?
- g) What is the Future Jobs Plan?
- h) Does the future jobs plan implement recommendations and departmental responses arising from the Capability Review?
- i) What are the implications of the capability review and/or other reviews on the APS 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 classifications?
- j) Has the department plans to remove a range of job titles from the departmental organisational structure? Has this any implications for staffing numbers?
- k) Are there plans to move to an organisational structure where broadly skilled employees are replaced with more compartmentalised, less skilled or qualified staff?

- l) What steps are being taken to communicate the Department strategic vision in a meaningful way to all staff?
- m) Do you believe that DHS is providing excellence in the provision of government services to every Australian, consistent with your vision statement?
- n) What engagement has the Department had with the National Commission of Audit?

**Answer:**

- a) The departmental response was included in the Review Report. The department welcomed the report and identified what actions were planned to address the findings.
- b) To ensure continuity in the department's capacity to operate innovatively, we have continued investing in transforming the way we work so that we can keep pace with our customers' expectations for how they do business with us. This has resulted in even more one-stop-shops and a greater focus on self-service.  
As part of our ongoing commitment to innovation and improvement, we consistently employ a co-design approach to the development of our services to ensure we understand and reflect the needs of our customers. To reinforce our successful culture of innovation and change we encourage ongoing dialogue with our staff through our official innovation program (known as iDHS) to capture, assess and progress innovative ideas by staff. We have also launched our new culture statement and core behaviours with our staff.
- c) In 2012-13 departmental expenses of \$4.5 billion represented 3 per cent of total administered expenses and payments on behalf of other agencies; \$150.8 billion.
- d) The department continues to work with government on prioritising programmes and areas of work.
- e) The department is continuing to deliver more efficient and effective services through approaches that streamline services and support customers to self manage and access digital services.

The department is enhancing its digital services, particularly online registration, claiming processes, online letters and mobile apps so that customers can access services *on the go*, increasing access and convenience.

A national operating model for the Front of House has been introduced which aims to streamline face to face operations and improve the customer experience. The department is also designing and trialling new face to face service offers to help better meet the needs of communities in delivering quality and efficient services. Examples include Pop-Up outlets, digital service shopfronts (Margate QLD), shared servicing with other organisations and the use of the provision of services through high-definition video conferencing.

The department is committed to continuous improvement, by using the Lean methodology, to deliver better customer value through reducing business inefficiencies. An innovation program has also been introduced to capture, assess and progress ideas on continuous improvement and service delivery.

A new work management system called Customer First is being implemented which enables best use of staff skills, balance workloads, and produce more effective responses to emergencies and other priorities. A new Child Support computer system is being developed to provide increased functionality, better data and payment integrity, and completeness in the services being offered to people online.

- f) The department is tasked with the role of delivering social, health and other services on behalf of the Australian Government. The department continues to work with government on prioritising programmes and areas of work.
- g) The Future Jobs Plan is the implementation of new service delivery job titles and job statements in the department for the provision of high quality, flexible and efficient services to customers and to government.

New service delivery job statements are required for:

- compliance with APS legislation regarding the management of classifications;
  - ensuring our jobs are correctly classified in line with the DHS Work Level Standards;
  - clearly distinguishing between jobs at the same, and different, classifications;
  - clearly defining jobs for staff and managers, including for performance management and budgeting;
  - supporting the recruitment process for new staff;
  - supporting capability development of staff;
  - supporting our workforce planning activities; and
  - clearly articulating career pathways for staff.
- h) Yes. The creation of new service delivery job statements is a key project within the department's Workforce Transformation Programme.  
The Workforce Transformation Programme was created as part of the department's Capability Review Action Plan. The Action Plan specifies eight projects that address development areas highlighted in the Capability Review. Workforce Transformation is one of the eight projects.
  - i) The new service delivery job statements will provide clarity on the type of work expected at each classification in line with the department's Work Level Standards.
  - j) The Future Jobs Plan is streamlining the use of job titles in the department. It is consolidating over 100 job titles into approximately 30 'like' roles, with supporting job statements to provide consistency in our service delivery.  
The Future Jobs Plan is not about reducing the number of staff or downgrading jobs.
  - k) No. The department is focussed on creating roles that give customers increased support and a more holistic service from cross-skilled staff who are better equipped to identify their needs.
  - l) The department's strategic vision forms part of the department's Strategic Plan 2012-16. The Strategic Plan is communicated to all staff using a range of communication channels, including Videos on Demand and by cascading the strategic vision through the business planning and Individual Performance Agreement processes.
  - m) The department strives to provide excellence in the provision of services to every Australian, every day. We know that sometimes this may not be achieved but we seek to learn and adapt from any shortfalls.
  - n) The department has provided advice to the National Commission of Audit in response to requests from the Chair of the Commission. Since providing that advice, the Secretary has met with the Chair of the Commission and departmental staff have met with the Commission Secretariat.