

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 21 NOVEMBER 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Chronic Disease Dental Scheme – audit process

Question reference number: HS 93

Senator: Bushby

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 3

Question:

- a) In respect of how many dentists has Human Services made requests on behalf of, to the Department of Finance and Deregulation, for a waiver of debts that arose due to non-compliance with the requirements of the CDDS?
- b) In respect of how many dentists has the Department sought a debt waiver, either in full or part?
- c) How many of the dentists in respect of which the Department sought a debt waiver, have not had that request granted?
- d) How many dentists involved in the waiving of debt process have been notified that their debt has been waived?
- e) How many dentists involved in the waiving of debt process have been notified that their debt has not been waived (i.e. rejected)?
- f) On what date/s was the Department notified by the Special Minister of State of successful / unsuccessful applications for waiver? Please list each case.
- g) On what date/s were the relevant dentists notified by the Department as to whether their debt has/has not been waived?
- h) At what stage is the audit process (i.e. is it still underway)? How many dentists have so far been audited? How many does the Department expect to audit in total?
- i) When does the Department expect the re-assessment of audits will be complete?
- j) Has the Department (in collaboration with other Department/s) considered abandoning the audit process and/or the re-assessment process? If so, please outline.
- k) How many staff are still working on the audit?
- l) How many dedicated hours/days have staff spent on the audit and re-assessment process?
- m) What has the audit process cost to date?
- n) What is the audit process expected to cost once finalised?
- o) Have there been any legal costs associated with the audit/re-assessment process? Please detail.

Answers:

- a) As at 31 October 2013, the department had made applications to the Department of Finance to waive debts in relation to non-compliance with the requirements of the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme (CDDS) on behalf of 80 dental practitioners.
- b) In respect of the 80 dental practitioners for whom debt waivers had been sought by the department as at 31 October 2013, 49 waiver applications were for the full amount of the debt and 31 were for a partial waiver of the debt.
- c) For the 80 dental practitioners for whom debt waivers have been sought by the department as at 31 October 2013, waiver of debt has been granted for 53 practitioners, and decisions were pending in respect of waiver applications for the other 27 practitioners.
- d) Of the 53 dental practitioners where a waiver of debt had been granted as at 31 October 2013, all 53 practitioners were notified of the outcome of their waiver application by the department.
- e) As at 31 October 2013, none of the dental practitioners for whom a debt waiver has been sought by the department have had their application rejected.
- f) The outcomes of all waiver decisions have been communicated to the Department by the Department of Finance, irrespective of whether the decision-maker was the delegate in Finance or the Special Minister of State. Table 1 lists each waiver application and the dates the department was notified of the outcome of the application.

Table 1

Date of decision	Decision-maker	Full or partial waiver	Number of providers in application	Approved / Rejected
30 October 2012	Special Minister of State	Full	17	Approved
24 January 2013	Special Minister of State	Full	20	Approved
18 March 2013	Delegate of the Department of Finance	Full	1	Approved
5 June 2013	Delegate of the Department of Finance	Full	1	Approved
25 July 2013	Delegate of the Department of Finance	Partial	1	Approved
26 July 2013	Delegate of the Department of Finance	Partial	3	Approved
31 July 2013	Delegate of the Department of Finance	Partial	1	Approved
29 August 2013	Delegate of the Department of Finance	Partial	3	Approved
3 September 2013	Delegate of the Department of Finance	Partial	4	Approved
15 October 2013	Delegate of the Department of Finance	Partial	1	Approved
31 October 2013	Delegate of the Department of Finance	Full	1	Approved

The department is not able to list the names of the dental practitioners concerned due to privacy considerations.

- g) Table 2 lists each waiver application and the dates the department notified dental practitioners of the outcome of their waiver application.

Table 2

Date practitioner notified by the Department	Full or partial waiver	Number of providers in application	Approved / Rejected
7 November 2012	Full	17	Approved
13 February 2013	Full	20	Approved
5 April 2013	Full	1	Approved
17 June 2013	Full	1	Approved
2 September 2013	Partial	5	Approved
4 September 2013	Partial	3	Approved
10 September 2013	Partial	4	Approved
31 October 2013	Partial	1	Approved
13 November 2013	Full	1	Approved

The department is not able to list the names of the dental practitioners concerned due to privacy considerations.

- h) The audit process is still underway.
 Since the scheme commenced, as at 31 October 2013 the department has audited 594 dental practitioners.
 The department will complete the 15 audit cases on hand, plus any additional audits that are required as a result of tip-offs or complaints received by the department.
- i) The department estimates that the reassessment of audits for waiver applications will be submitted to the Department of Finance by 31 March 2014.
- j) No.
- k) There are currently 35 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff working on audits.
- l) Table 3 shows the number of dedicated hours/days that have been spent by staff on the audit and re-assessment process since the implementation of the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme (CDDS) Taskforce in June 2010 to 31 October 2013.

Table 3

Year	Total working days	Total working hours
2009-10	9.80	73.50
2010-11	5,502.76	41,270.68
2011-12	11,066.96	83,002.20
2012-13	6,432.91	48,246.84
2013-14*	3,246.80	24,350.99
Total	26,259.23	196,944.21

*Year to 31 October 2013

- m) The audit process has cost \$9.4 million from the implementation of the CDDS Taskforce in June 2010 to 31 October 2013.
- n) Once the audits are finalised in 2014, the total cost of the CDDS audit process is estimated to be \$12.3 million.
- o) External legal services engaged for mediation, advisory and other associated correspondence services have totalled \$40,353.