

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 22 OCTOBER 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Homeless Indicators

Question reference number: HS 70

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 December 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

In 2013/14 83,747 customers had a Homelessness indicator on their records, and this rose to 98,918 in 2014/15, a jump of over 18%. Please provide any analysis DHS has done of this increase and any consultations, policy development or training for staff associated with this increase.

Answer:

The Department of Human Services has not undertaken any formal analysis on the rise of the use of homelessness indicators. However, some of the implications of the increase in homelessness indicators include:

- an increased need for departmental staff awareness about homelessness in Australia, the definitions of homelessness, the factors contributing to homelessness and the link between homelessness and vulnerability;
- a requirement for departmental staff to have knowledge of the flexible options for service delivery available to customers experiencing homelessness; and
- a greater need for training of departmental staff to enable the skills to identify and respond appropriately to homeless customers.

The Department's Social Work Service and Community Engagement Officers provide regular case consultation and informal education to staff on the subject of homelessness and the associated impacts. The Social Work Service provides Homelessness Awareness training to staff as required.