

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 21 October 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000868

OUTCOME: 11 – Ageing and Aged Care

Topic: Gateway

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Polley, Helen

Question:

The My Aged Care gateway, including call centre and website, was meant to make it easier and less confusing for consumers to access aged care. There is widespread frustration and anger from consumers expressing that it is now more complicated and confusing. What is being done to address consumer concerns?

Was the Gateway always meant to go beyond information provision to the allocation of services to various providers? How does this give the consumer more control and choice?

Answer:

The My Aged Care customer satisfaction survey outlined that overall satisfaction with the contact centre remained high (96 per cent satisfied) from July to September 2015.

The My Aged Care contact centre experienced significantly higher than expected levels of demand, from June 2015. The longer wait times for callers in this period and delays processing referrals of clients will likely have contributed to some client dissatisfaction with the service.

The Department worked to resolve these issues as quickly as possible and additional contact centre staff have been recruited and trained which has greatly assisted to reduce average call wait times. The average speed to answer calls decreased from 8.33 minutes in July 2015 to 3.44 minutes in September 2015.

My Aged Care has been established by the Australian Government to help older people navigate the aged care system. This includes information provision, assessment of needs and referrals to service. My Aged Care is part of the Australian Government's changes to the aged care system (aged care reform) which have been designed to give people more choice, more control and easier access to a full range of aged care services.

The Gateway was always intended to go beyond information provision. However, it does not allocate services to providers. It can make referrals to providers on behalf of the client. Referrals are based on clients' decision on preferred provider. This approach supports consumer control and choice.