

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2015-16 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: Cross Outcome

Question No: SQ15-000864

Topic: DSS Grants

Hansard page: Written

Senator Rachel Siewert asked:

Does the Department of Social Services consider public advocacy activities when evaluating funding applications? How does the Department ensure independence in evaluating funding applications from agencies with strong public advocacy activities?

Answer:

The Department recognises the role community organisations, especially peak bodies, play in promoting issues important to the community services sector, particularly when organisations are championing the interests of individuals using government funded services.

Where advocacy is listed in Programme Guidelines as a specific activity that can be undertaken using DSS funding, this is taken into account when assessing grant applications.

To establish fair and ethical treatment of all applicants in selection processes, the Department developed a governance model which ensured that delegates, selections board members, expert panel members and assessors were not able to traverse their assigned roles and disproportionately affect the final outcome of a grant application.

The Department's selections processes are consistent with the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines.