

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

Question No: SQ15-000905

Outcome Number: Cross Outcome - Across Programmes

Topic: DSS Discretionary Grants

Hansard page: Written

Senator Carol Brown asked:

In response to SQ15-000416 from Senate Budget Estimates the Department stated that “The Department provided recommendations on the geographical areas where service gaps were identified to the Minister.” However in response to questions from Senator Moore at Supplementary Estimates, in relation to the response to SQ15-000416, officers stated that “The recommendations might have included a specific organisation.”

1. Given this evidence can you clarify whether recommendations to the Minister on the outcome of the gap analysis identified geographic regions only or geographic regions and potential service types, or specific service providers for those regions?
2. If they included potential service types or service providers, were they identified for every geographical region recommended for funding? If not, what was the process for determining the funding recipients if specific recommendations were not made by the Department to the Minister?
3. Did the Minister’s office request or make changes to the response to SQ15-000416 that was drafted by the Department?
4. At the Supplementary Estimates hearing officials indicated that not all of the 94 services that Minister Morrison announced funding for on 10 June were recommended for funding by the department.
 - a. Can you please confirm the number of services which were not recommended for funding?
 - b. How many additional services did the Department recommended for funding that were not provided funding?
 - c. Please provide both numbers broken down by state, postcode, and Commonwealth electorate.

Answer:

1. The Department made recommendations to the then Minister for Social Services on the basis of gaps identified in a particular geographic area for specific service types (for example, Emergency Relief). In some cases, the Department advised the Minister of a previously funded service provider that could be approached directly as an option to deliver the service.
2. In those cases where a specific provider was not recommended, the Department conducted a restricted selection process to find a suitable organisation.
3. Yes.
4. In accordance with the Commonwealth Grant Rules and Guidelines (paragraph 4.13), the Minister must report all instances where there was a decision to approve a particular grant that the relevant official recommended be rejected. The report must be provided to the Finance Minister by 31 March 2016.