

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 – 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000548

OUTCOME: 6 – Ageing and Aged Care

Topic: Aged Care Complaints Commissioner

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Senator Rachel Siewert

Question:

- a) How many complaints has the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner received in the last 12 months? Please provide by category of complainant, for example residents, staff, and family of residents.
- b) How many of the complaints received within the last 12 months were investigated? Please provide by category of complainant.
- c) How many were substantiated? Please provide by category of complainant.

Answer:

- a) The Aged Care Complaints Commissioner commenced on 1 January 2016, taking on the staff and functions of the former Aged Care Complaints Scheme. Between 1 January and 30 September 2016, we have received 3,331 complaints. Of these complaints:
 - 1,992 were received from representatives of people receiving care, including family members
 - 569 were received from people receiving care
 - 485 were received from anonymous complainants
 - 268 were received from other interested people, and
 - 17 were received from other agencies as referrals.
- b) Between 1 January and 30 September 2016 we received 3,331 complaints. Some of these cases are still being resolved. In the same period, we finalised 3,223 complaints, including some received by the former Aged Care Complaints Scheme, before 1 January 2016.

All complaints are carefully assessed on receipt. Of those closed between 1 January and 30 September 2016, 2,857 were resolved informally between the parties. The remaining 366 were resolved by a formal resolution process. Depending on the issues involved in the complaint, formal resolution processes can use one or more of four approaches: investigation, mediation, conciliation and service provider resolution. Often a combination is used, depending on the issues. Many complaints involve multiple issues.

Of the 366 complaints finalised through a formal resolution process, 196 included, or consisted solely of, investigation.

- c) The Aged Care Complaints Commissioner does not focus on ‘substantiating’ complaints: the *Complaints Principles 2015* require the Complaints Commissioner to manage and resolve complaints and provide a range of decisions that can be made. Between 1 January and 30 September 2016, we resolved 3,223 complaints. Of these:
- 1,888 were complaints from representatives of people receiving care, including family members
 - 561 were complaints from people receiving care
 - 477 were complaints from anonymous complainants
 - 273 were complaints from other interested people
 - 22 were referrals from other agencies, and
 - 2 were commenced on our own initiative.