

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 May 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE17/092) - Legacy caseload - Legal assistance costs in comparison to original projections - Programme 2.4: Refugee and Humanitarian Assistance

Senator McKim, Nick (L&CA 38 & 39) asked:

Senator McKIM: If you could respond on notice to the best of your capacity, thank you. What has been the total cost of government funded legal representation and the number of clients that have been assisted through PAIS?

Ms Lauman: Sorry, I have got the figures for the two different programs together and I am just trying to pull them apart.

Senator McKIM: What is the other one, apart from PAIS?

Ms Lauman: The IAAAS, which is the more general one. The cumulative figure I have here for PAIS services for IMAs and UAAs between 2012 and 2017 is \$3.4 million.

Senator McKIM: Do you have a breakdown of that in financial years?

Ms Lauman: It was almost solely accrued in 2015-16, which was \$2.2 million, and this financial year, which was \$1.2 million.

Senator McKIM: How do those figures compare to the cost initially projected by the department?

Ms Lauman: We would have to take that on notice.

Senator McKIM: This is a very general question, but is the actual expenditure significantly less than the budgeted expenditure?

Ms Lauman: We would need to take that on notice.

Senator McKIM: In those figures you have provided to me, given that we have talked about the number of people assisted and also the cost, do you have a cost-per-person-assisted figure?

Ms Lauman: We do, but I am not sure it is in the papers, so I might need to come back to you on that.

Answer:

The total of the payments made to providers under the Primary Application Information Service (PAIS) for 2015-16 was \$2.4 million and 2016-17 as at 30 April was \$3.2 million. Between 1 July 2016 and 30 April 2017 1,836 people were referred for PAIS assistance. Funding has matched demand for the service and the Department has not had cause to undertake a comparative analysis of projected costs and actual expenditure.

The Department is unable to provide a cost-per-person as the costs vary depending on individual circumstances. Variable factors impacting on-per-person include whether the person is an unaccompanied minor, an individual or part of a family group, in immigration detention or in the community, in a metropolitan area or regional area, and whether interpreter services are required.