

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and agencies

Budget Estimates 2006-2007, 25 May 2006

Question: HS31

Outcome 1, Output 1.1

Topic: Centrelink – Indigenous Servicing and Staffing

Hansard Page or Written Question on Notice: F&PA123

SENATOR MOORE asked on 25/5/2006:

Mr Whalan—We have Indigenous service officers.

Senator MOORE—It is another snapshot element which I know you have picked up in your review of Indigenous services and which will lead to more questions subsequently. The methodology of service delivery for Indigenous people in Centrelink has evolved and I am just trying to get an idea of exactly how it is now.

Mr Whalan—We will give you an overview of Indigenous staffing and how we deliver in relation to Indigenous customers.

Answer:

A review of Centrelink's 2000-2004 Indigenous Servicing Strategy was undertaken in 2005. In considering the achievements under this document and consistent with the direction of the Agency, a new servicing strategy has been developed and will be available on our website in the near future. Centrelink also has a Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation and a National Indigenous Employees Plan that set the strategic direction for the delivery of services to Indigenous people by all members of our organisation.

The Indigenous Servicing Strategy articulates priorities across the organisation to assist in the appropriate delivery of services to Indigenous customers. Areas of particular focus include access to services, employment of Indigenous people and debt prevention.

Centrelink has over 830 staff who identify as Indigenous (number taken from 2006 Quarter 2 figures People & Planning).

Centrelink utilises several mechanisms in delivering services to Indigenous customers. These include:

- Indigenous Services Branch;
- Indigenous Service Unit Managers;
- Indigenous Service Officers (currently 76);
- Indigenous Customer Service Officers (currently 48);
- Indigenous Communications Team;
- Indigenous Call Centres;

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- Remote Visiting Teams;
- Remote Area Service Centres (7 operational);
- Centrelink Agents and Access Points;
- National Indigenous Coalition;
- Indigenous Community Agents (186); and
- Cadetship and Scholarship Programs for Indigenous staff.

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 3 hours and 46 minutes at an estimated cost of \$213.