



Agnes
Kumar/ACT/IMMI/AU
19/02/2009 03:58 PM

To Tom Clarke <tom.clarke@anao.gov.au>
cc deborah.jackson@anao.gov.au,
peter.templeton@immi.gov.au
bcc

Subject Re: Performance audit of SGP - request for
confirmation of details of Parliamentary
Secretary involvement [SEC = UNCLASSIFIED]
□

Protective UNCLASSIFIED
Mark

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Tom

I am just waiting for additional documentation from NSW and Victoria on that and will respond as soon as I can. It may be tomorrow morning if I don't get that this afternoon. I hope that is okay.

Regards

Agnes Kumar
Director
Settlement Grants Section
Ph: (02) 6198 7213
Tom Clarke <tom.clarke@anao.gov.au >



Tom Clarke
<tom.clarke@anao.gov.au
>
19/02/2009 03:05 PM

To peter.templeton@immi.gov.au
cc agnes.kumar@immi.gov.au,
deborah.jackson@anao.gov.au
Subject Performance audit of SGP - request for
confirmation of details of Parliamentary
Secretary involvement [SEC = UNCLASSIFIED]
Protective
Mark

Hello Peter/Agnes

As I mentioned in my telephone message and at the Exit Interview for our performance audit, the Auditor -General has taken a particular interest in the four projects for which DIAC was asked to consider funding in the 2008-09 round. In discussions with our Executive today, that interest was re-stated. It is important for us to be confident that we have all the evidence that has a bearing on this matter.

With respect to the four projects for which DIAC was asked to consider funding in the 2008-09 round, could you confirm, in writing (email will do), the following:

the origin of the suggestion that these four should be funded from the additional monies (ie: did the Parliamentary Secretary or his office

approach DIAC or vice versa?);

the process DIAC applied to form an opinion that the four were suitable for funding;

that DIAC has provided the ANAO with all documentation (including emails, notes etc) relevant to this matter.

We would appreciate a rapid response in order to finalise the draft report.

Thank you for your continuing cooperation.

Regards

Tom

Tom Clarke
Executive Director
Australian National Audit Office

Ph: (02) 6203 7436
Fax: (02) 6203 7639
Mailto:tom.clarke@anao.gov.au

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Tom Clarke
 <tom.clarke@anao.gov.au>
 >
 20/02/2009 04:25 PM

To Peter.Templeton@IMMI.GOV.AU,
 agnes.kumar@immi.gov.au
 cc deborah.jackson@anao.gov.au
 bcc

Subject Re: 2008-09 SGP round - response to Tom's
 message [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
 Protective UNCLASSIFIED
 Mark

History: This message has been replied to and forwarded.

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Peter/Agnes. Thank you for your response. While it answers most of our questions it does not directly answer the first:

"the origin of the suggestion that these four should be funded from the additional monies (ie: did the Parliamentary Secretary or his office approach DIAC or vice versa?)"

I appreciate that this may be an awkward question to answer, but I do need a direct answer please.

Happy to discuss

Tom

Tom Clarke
 Executive Director
 Australian National Audit Office

Ph: (02) 6203 7436
 Fax: (02) 6203 7639
 Mailto:tom.clarke@anao.gov.au

agnes.kumar@
 immi.gov.au

20/02/2009
 01:14 PM

deborah.jackson@anao.gov.au,
 tom.clarke@anao.gov.au

To

cc

Peter.Templeton@IMMI.GOV.AU
 Subject
 2008-09 SGP round - response to
 Tom's message [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Deb/Tom

The following relates to the process followed by our state offices in determining which of the projects would be funded with the additional funds. As indicated previously, there were a number of informal discussions with the Parliamentary Secretary relating to which additional projects could be funded. These discussions were held with the the State

Director in Victoria and the Deputy State Director in NSW. DIAC will ensure that such discussions are documented in future.

It is not uncommon for the Department to have discussions with the Parliamentary Secretary's office on funding priorities or which organisations are likely to miss out on funding. These discussions are intended to keep the Parliamentary Secretary abreast with developments.

As part of the 2009-10 round, NatO will request that a comprehensive comparative assessment be done again as part of selecting organisations which are recommended for funding as a result of additional funds being available. Any discussions with the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary will also be documented.

I can confirm that DIAC has provided all documentation relating to decisions made on additional funding where discretion was exercised by the Parliamentary Secretary.

NSW

There are a number of TRIM records which relate to the 2008-09 SGP round and contain evidence on how the funding recommendations were progressed. One of these is the Priority 2 Project applications list. This list included projects which were originally not recommended for funding but could be funded if additional funds were available. The list also included applications which were recommended for funding but would benefit from additional funding as well as a number of new projects from applicants who had not previously received funding under the SGP. A copy of the list is attached.

NSW's allocation of the additional moneys available (post budget) under the 2008-09 SGP was made on the basis of ensuring that service provision under the SGP would be maximized, and where possible and appropriate, that the existing service delivery network be maintained. Therefore it was decided that the funding would be distributed across a number of previously funded projects administered by the LCC, Maronites and the Alevis, in order to ensure that there was a transitional strategy for the organizations whose client base at the time was sufficient to warrant funding for one more year, and create minimal impact on agency clients.

(See attached file: Distribution of post budget SGP allocation May 08.XLS)

During this process a number of informal discussions with DIAC NSW State Executive and National Office with the PS were undertaken to ensure recommendations were in line with Government imperatives.

The LCC, Maronites and the Alevis projects had been funded for a number of years, and have all met DIAC accountability requirements. These applications were not in the top priority recommendations on the basis that as there were a number of other funded organizations that were able to meet the settlement of these communities in their proposed service regions, and as such funding for these projects was not a priority in light of the limited SGP allocation to NSW.

Upon reconsideration of the applications in light of the post budget allocation, it was assessed that the organisations and their client base would benefit from one year of funding. The LCC and the Maronites were providing services that targeted the Arabic speaking communities with a focus on the Lebanese target group arrivals. Whilst there were a number of other services in the proposed service region, it was assessed that the number of Lebanese target group arrivals in the proposed service regions were sufficient to warrant funding to these services - the Maronites were funded at a part time level to service Lebanese Maronite Christians in Central Western Sydney and the LCC were funded to provide a generalist Arabic speaker service in Canterbury-Bankstown.

The Alevis were proposing to service the Alevite community and were the only ethno specific service catering to this target group, and such were funded at a part time level. All applications met the SGP criteria , and as a risk mitigation strategy the Maronite and Alevi projects had a number of conditions attached to indicate to them that 08/09 would be the last year of funding , and that alternative sources of support should be sought (this is in line with DIAC NSW funding strategy for ethno-specific organisations where it is anticipated that a specific ethnospecific service is no longer warranted due to diminishing client base). Consequently in the 2009-2010 round funding we did not recommend these organizations on the basis of diminished need for services to the target communities, as we had envisaged.

These projects were chosen above the new applications from Angels of Mercy , Immigrant Womens Speakout and ACORW as it was assessed that these projects already had an on going client base that would be affected in the short term should funding not be continued. Moreover funding was offered in the interest of ensuring that the agencies are able to better position themselves to attract alternative sources of support to continue their services should SGP funding not be forthcoming in the future. The intention was also to give agencies a very clear message that unless their target group numbers increased, funding would cease in the future.

It should also be noted that the one of the new projects (Angels of Mercy) which was on the Priority 2 project list was subsequently funded as well due to another agency not accepting an offer of funding during the 2008/09 round.

Victoria

Gippsland Multicultural Services Inc. (GMS) applied for SGP funding in the 2008-09 round. Funding was not recommended in the DIAC Victoria assessments undertaken around November 2007 on the basis of duplication of existing services, that is, the organisation was already funded to deliver SGP services in the area.

Between November 2007 and March 2008 DIAC Victoria received numerous anecdotal reports that secondary migration of Sudanese humanitarian entrants to Latrobe Valley had increased significantly. GMS made several representations, to the Department and to Members of Parliament, claiming that secondary migration of Sudanese into the Latrobe Valley and the Wonthaggi area had created a greater demand on their services. When similar claims were made at the Central West Gippsland Planning Committee meeting of 13 March 2008, DIAC Victoria's regional settlement officer sought independent evidence of this trend from the local representative of the Office of Housing (OoH) on 17 March 2008. Information from OoH indicated that:

approximately 30 Sudanese families were living in public housing in the Latrobe Valley
each week approximately 3-7 Sudanese families located in Melbourne on the housing waiting list were changing their preferred location from metro Melbourne to Latrobe Valley
75% of families changing their preferred housing region to the Latrobe Valley on the public housing waiting list were Sudanese. File Reference: PSF2007/22 folio 211.

These figures supported the claims that there was a growing demand for settlement services in Gippsland, and that that need was likely to continue and grow over time.

Whilst DIAC Victoria had had concerns about GMS's financial management in relation to their existing grant, a mitigation strategy was developed in consultation with GMS in early 2008.

On 5 May 2008 SGP Section in National Office advised STO of additional monies for settlement projects and requested recommendations, in order of priority, for possible allocation of said additional funding. In response, on 7 May 2008, DIAC Victoria recommended four projects, including the GMS proposed project, but of the four projects, it was rated with the lowest priority. A copy of this list is attached.

(See attached file: Additional grants for recommendation should extra SGP funds be available.doc)

On 9 May, DIAC Victoria received a request for advice and a written briefing for the Parliamentary Secretary for a meeting with five community organisations on 20 May 2008. One of the organisations was GMS and PS's office was seeking advice about the issues raised by the Director of GMS in relation to increased settlement in Gippsland.

On 12 May the Director of S&MA had a further discussion with the State Director and proposed an amended priority list. They agreed that the needs of new settlers in Gippsland had emerged as a priority, (which the State Director had highlighted in his discussion with the PS office about the upcoming meetings) but also that the project proposed by GMS put forward a budget that was inconsistent with the outcomes sought. The State Director and Director, S&MA agreed the shortcomings of the proposed project could be overcome, were DIAC to fund GMS for less than that for which it had submitted.

An amended list was forwarded to National Office putting Gippsland Multicultural Services Inc, with a lower recommended funding amount, at the top of a list of four projects.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any additional information.

Regards

Agnes Kumar
Director
Settlement Grants Section
Ph: (02) 6198 7213

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(See attached file: Distribution of post budget SGP allocation May 08.XLS)
(See attached file: Additional grants for recommendation should extra SGP funds be available.doc)

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Distribution of post budget SGP allocation May 08.XLS



Additional grants for recommendation should extra SGP funds be available .doc

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Distribution of additional post budget SGP allocation

Priority	Appn ID	Org ID	Organisation	DIAC project name	Rec \$Y1	Rec Yrs	Revised \$Y1	Y2	Revised Yrs	Extra \$	NOTES
1	N08/5402	854	Australia Alevi Cultural Centre Incorp.	Orientation, Developing communities and Integration services to newly arrived Alevi migrants in Central Western Sydney and Blacktown NSW.	0	0	52020	0	1	52020	Funding to the Alevi community needs to be maintained. Recommend project for one year as a transitional project to allow for the organisation to enhance relationships with other agencies with a view of securing alternate sources of support. Impose conditions on funding. Conditions on funding: Funding is offered on the condition that the applicant establishes and implements a strategy to enhance relationships with other agencies in order to ensure effective delivery of project outcomes and to secure alternate sources of support.
1	N08/5328	664	Maronite Catholic Society Inc.	Orientation to Australia for newly arrived Lebanese, Sudanese, Egyptians and Iraqis in Central Western Sydney and Blacktown areas.	0	0	40800	0	1	40800	Funding to the Lebanese Maronite community needs to be maintained. Recommend project for one year as a transitional project to allow for the organisation to enhance relationships with other agencies with a view of securing alternate sources of support. Conditions are also imposed with a view to addressing service delivery concerns continuously late reporting , lack of management committee involvement and accountability for service delivery outcomes and poor accessibility of service to the proposed target group. Conditions on funding: Funding is offered on the condition that the applicant; a) creates and maintains a Project Steering Committee which meets monthly and comprises of relevant agency staff , the agency's Management Committee members and DIAC. The Steering Committee will be created so as to ensure effective delivery of project outcomes and to ensure that accountability requirements are met and progress in meeting these outcomes are closely monitored ; and b) establishes and implements a strategy to enhance relationships with other agencies in order to ensure effective delivery of project outcomes and to secure alternate sources of support.
1	N08/5717	747	Lebanese Community Council of NSW	Inf'n, referral, capacity building & service planning for newly arrived migrants & humanitarian entrants of Arabic Background in Cant-Bankstown SSD.	0	0	72828	0	1	72828	Funding to Arabic speaking services in Canterbury-Bankstown, and overall funding to Lebanese community organisations need to be maintained.
2	N08/5550	142	Mt Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency	Services under all 3 service types to newly arrived Arabic speaking migrants in Mt.Druitt and surrounding areas	69656	1	74000		1	4344	(Top up to recommended application) Organisation is currently looking to secure more suitable accommodation (current service premises are too small to accommodate their expansion in services). Current premise is owned by Dept of Health who are also keen for them to vacate the premises.Representations were made to the department as well as to Roger Price MP and Blacktown Council in relation to securing alternate accommodation however no outcome was reached .Whilst new accommodation has not been identified a slight increase in funding will allow for committal of funds towards securing new premises. Previous SAP NSW allocation did not allow for an increase in funding towards accommodation costs. The organisation is an excellent performer in the context of SGP service delivery, and the provision additional funds to secure alternate accommodation will go towards enhanced service delivery.