



The Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP
Minister for Family & Community Services

Mr Stewart Smith
Director
Budget Estimates
Room 812
Legislative Council
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Smith

I write regarding Budget Estimates 2014 for the portfolio of Family and Community Services.

Please find attached answers to Questions on Notice taken during the hearing and Supplementary questions from the Committee.

Also find attached corrections to the Hansard transcript of the hearing.

If you require further information, please contact Julian Crowley in my office on 8574 6100 or julian.crowley@minister.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Gabrielle Upton MP
Minister for Family & Community Services

16-9-14

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2014-15

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – FROM HEARING TRANSCRIPT

QUESTION 1 – PAGE 3

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: But what is the number of intoxicated persons who were admitted to the eastern beaches sobering-up shelter?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: For those details I will ask the Secretary to comment.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: The Secretary is struggling with his notes to see if he can find the figure. I think we may need to take that on notice and provide you with the number. We will have a quick look at the notes and if we can provide you with the number now we will, otherwise we will take it on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised by the Department of Family and Community Services that a trial of three sobering up centres commenced in July 2013 as part of a broader NSW Government strategy to tackle alcohol-related violence. The Department of Family and Community Services established two non-mandatory centres located in Wollongong and Sydney's Eastern Beaches and a mandatory centre, run by NSW Police, was established in Sydney city. Following an evaluation, the Government has announced it will extend the trial of the mandatory police centre.

QUESTION 2 – PAGE 3

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Could you advise the Committee what was the total expenditure on staffing of that centre?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: We will take that on notice.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Do you have details or any figures on this centre?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: No, I am sorry; we do not have an accurate figure on the number of people who use the centre, so we will have to take that on notice.

ANSWER

Refer to Transcript Question on Notice 1.

QUESTION 3 – PAGE 3

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes. What we are seeking is the total expenditure on the staffing of the centre and the fit-out. We want to know whether you are still meeting the rental costs. We believe that only around 10 people used that centre and we are seeking clarification whether that is in the ballpark of what has been reported to us.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: We will take that on notice and get back to you as soon as we can.

ANSWER

Refer to Transcript Question on Notice 1.

QUESTION 4 – PAGE 4

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can you also confirm to us then whether you are still paying staff at the centre and whether you still paying rent on the building?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: We will have to confirm that on notice as well.

ANSWER

Refer to Transcript Question on Notice 1.

QUESTION 5 – PAGE 4

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can you also provide us with information about what the plans are for the building given that you have just indicated that it will not be continuing?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes, of course

ANSWER

Refer to Transcript Question on Notice 1.

QUESTION 6 – PAGE 6

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, can you guarantee that there are not more inner city properties for public housing that you are planning to sell off, particularly in the Glebe Estate in Glebe, Surry Hills and Eveleigh?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Ms Sharpe, it is a very large portfolio. In the ordinary course of what Land and Housing Corporation does it plans for maintenance, sales and disposals within the portfolio, and for further details on the specifics of that I hand to the Secretary.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I do not think there are any plans to sell properties in Surry Hills or Glebe. There is a potential redevelopment in South Eveleigh that we would be happy to provide information about on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised by the Department of Family and Community Services that the NSW Land and Housing Corporation has an ongoing program to review its public housing assets to ensure that they meet the needs of public housing tenants and to provide a sustainable social housing system.

QUESTION 7 – PAGE 6

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: How many households have been approached in relation to being charged the bed tax?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: We will take that question on notice.

ANSWER

There is no bed tax.

QUESTION 8 – PAGE 6

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Would you provide a break down by suburb?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I think we can. We will attempt to present the information that way.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Would you also provide us with information about how many households have chosen to relocate rather than pay the bed tax?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes.

ANSWER

There is no bed tax.

QUESTION 9 – PAGE 7

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Will you provide your modelling in relation to the additional revenue you expect to be collected as a result of the bed tax?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: We will take that question on notice as well.

ANSWER

There is no bed tax.

QUESTION 10 – PAGE 8

Ms JAN BARHAM: I would like some information about unaccompanied minors, particularly girls. There is concern about them in the city and in some regional areas.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: The data we have indicates that about 1,300 12- to 15-year-olds move in and out of the crisis system each year. That is entirely unacceptable. Of them, 60 per cent are girls. It has been argued by the sector and providers in the sector for a long time that there is a need for us to better connect some of the elements of the service system in the work we do in the department in supporting children in out-of-home care. A proportion of these are our children, that is, children under the parental responsibility of the Minister. Each year \$9 million is allocated for more and better services targeting those 1,300 young people. We are working with the sector both through the peak bodies and individual services to co-design what an addition to the service system should look like to best meet the needs of those young people.

Ms JAN BARHAM: How many of those 1,300 are children in care?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I do not know, but if we have the data I will provide it. I think we do.

ANSWER

I am advised by the Department of Family and Community Services that between 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, around 150 children and young people in the Parental Responsibility of the Minister were accommodated by a Specialist Homelessness Service.

More information about Going Home Staying Home reforms are available on the Housing NSW website at:

<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Help+with+Housing/Homelessness/Going+Home+Staying+Home/Going+Home+Staying+Home.htm>

QUESTION 11 – PAGE 8

Ms JAN BARHAM: How much work has been done to address the causes of the increase in homelessness? What have you delivered in response to the Ombudsman's recommendations about policies for social housing, asset and portfolio management and estate management? Big changes are happening in the system, but there is no policy to direct those changes. It appears to be a wait-and-see approach that catches people by surprise. They were due in December last year or January this year, but we have seen nothing.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Are you talking about the Auditor-General's report?

Ms JAN BARHAM: I said the Ombudsman's but I meant the Auditor-General's report.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: You are referring to the Auditor-General's report on public housing. The agency provided a response to the Public Accounts Committee in early August giving an update on the implementation of the recommendations in that report. I am more than happy to provide that in a response to a question on notice.

ANSWER

The Government has accepted the recommendations contained in the report and is currently addressing these.

QUESTION 12 – PAGE 9

Ms JAN BARHAM: I appreciate that. However, many people are concerned that these measures are being done via media releases and are not governed by policy strategy and public consultation. There might be input from the public or the community sector that could help to guide these initiatives. The Auditor-General said that people deserve to know whether the Government intends to consult or has consulted and whether it will deliver on the recommendations. I will put a question on notice about that.

ANSWER

This is not a question.

QUESTION 13 – PAGE 9

Ms JAN BARHAM: Do the contracts require an Aboriginal staffing level or cultural awareness training? Governments have been poor in ensuring that cultural awareness training is undertaken. Some of the problems that arise in these services are the result of Aboriginal people not being treated respectfully because people do not understand the behaviour and communication modes that must be observed. Is that part of the contract? Can you make blank contracts available?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes, we would be more than happy to make available the terms of the contracts. I do not know the answer to your question. I do not know whether we control it as an input to tell us about the Aboriginality of the staff. I doubt it; we are more likely to be looking at the competence of the organisations, which goes to the cultural competence of staff, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to work with Aboriginal communities.

Ms JAN BARHAM: A bit of an input-output process.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I am happy to take it on notice.

ANSWER

Details of the Going Home Staying Home reform are available on the Housing NSW website at:

<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Help+with+Housing/Homelessness/Going+Home+Staying+Home/Going+Home+Staying+Home.htm>

QUESTION 14– PAGE 11

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But you are not actively monitoring the number of beds staying open during the transition process?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: At a district level, absolutely. Transition by transition we have approached both parties. We have tried to facilitate discussions between them. We have got very heavily involved precisely to help manage the risks in transition. The funding is available. We have had examples where outgoing service providers have left early and happily incoming providers—for example, Erin's Place Women's Refuge—have been able to step up much earlier than expected. There have been some bumps along the way, but the funding is there, the transition is clear and there should be no reason for an outgoing service provider not to take in clients.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Could I give additional information?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, that is fine at this point. I am happy for you to clear that up on notice.

ANSWER

Details of the Going Home Staying Home reform are available on the Housing NSW website at:

<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Help+with+Housing/Homelessness/Going+Home+Staying+Home/Going+Home+Staying+Home.htm>

QUESTION 15 – PAGE 13

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you for that. Would you be able to put the rest of that answer on notice? I am asking a very specific question: How many of the eight young women who are currently in the Lillian Howell Project are under your parental responsibility? Maybe Ms Walk can answer that question.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I will ask the Secretary to comment but I caution you that you are identifying a particular number of young girls in a particular property, and I caution you against that. These young women are vulnerable; they are the women whom we are seeking to help—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But you cannot tell me where they are going.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: If you persist with that question I will ask the Secretary to comment.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Why do you not have the answer? It is a pretty important question; it is a very specific question.

CHAIR: Order! The Minister has the right to answer the question how she wishes, including asking the Secretary to comment—which is what she has done.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Unfortunately, there are about 18,900 children and young people in care in New South Wales at the moment. We will take that question on notice and provide information as appropriate. Of course, there are some very real constraints on us about identifying children in care.

ANSWER

Refer to Supplementary Question on Notice 57 and 58.

QUESTION 16 – PAGE 13 - 14

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Was the New South Wales Police Association or the NSW Police Force briefed about the changes or provided with any information about who to contact under the new system?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Under which new system?

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: The Going Home Staying Home.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I will ask the Secretary to comment on that.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I will have to take that on notice. There was a 14-month consultation process. There were about 75 submissions to it; there was a lot of consultation with a lot of government and non-government organisations. The Link to Home referral channel that has been established was pretty carefully designed with the views of all those people on board, so I would be greatly surprised if the police were not consulted along the way. But I will take it on notice.

ANSWER

Details of the Going Home Staying Home reform are available on the Housing NSW website at:

<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Help+with+Housing/Homelessness/Going+Home+Staying+Home/Going+Home+Staying+Home.htm>

QUESTION 17 – PAGE 14

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Are you concerned about the reduction of 24/7 services for women and children fleeing domestic violence and that they may end up in police stations until a refuge opens at 9.00 a.m.?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: There are specialist services for women with or without children, whether they are fleeing domestic violence or another circumstance. I will ask the Secretary to give you further details.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Will they be staffed overnight?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: You are asking specific questions about specific services and I will ask the Secretary to comment.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Will there be intakes during the night?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: The short answer is yes. If there are any services about which you have a specific concern we would be happy to take that concern, but the service system is designed to improve on the one we have got and I will not diminish it. Domestic violence happens, sadly, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our intake, both the system intake and individual services intake, needs to be available to women when they need it.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: But you will come back to me with where those services will be available 24/7—in which regions?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes, if that is helpful.

ANSWER

Details of the Going Home Staying Home reform are available on the Housing NSW website at:

<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Help+with+Housing/Homelessness/Going+Home+Staying+Home/Going+Home+Staying+Home.htm>

QUESTION 18 – PAGE 14

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: That is helpful. Are you aware that local police who have spent years building up relationships with the refuges say they have no idea where to take women now?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I find that unusual because the properties that are available to women for crisis accommodation and transitional accommodation have not changed; they have not diminished in number—in fact, they will increase in number. For example, 35 properties have been established inside a women's community housing entity established by the Government. So if there is any misapprehension by local police about the nature of their local service system and if you have got specific information about that we are happy to pursue that through our district leaders.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: We certainly have had concerns expressed to us by police about a lack of awareness about where to take women now who are victims of domestic violence—that is both in regional and in metropolitan areas, and I do not think the police would be misleading us.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: To the Secretary's point, there are 1,300 government properties, some of which provide housing and critical services for vulnerable women who are fleeing domestic violence—with or without children—and they remain in the system. The bricks and mortar are still there. We are happy to take your point on notice, but those services will continue. Those buildings will still be provided for those purposes.

ANSWER

Details of the Going Home Staying Home reform are available on the Housing NSW website at:

<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Help+with+Housing/Homelessness/Going+Home+Staying+Home/Going+Home+Staying+Home.htm>

QUESTION 19 – PAGE 19

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Thank you for that partial answer but it does not answer the part of the question that goes to why since 2011, if you actually aggregate the underspend in this area, we have almost a \$20 million underspend.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I would need to take on notice what happened in previous budgets, I am sorry. I am familiar with 2013-14 but I am not familiar with previous years.

ANSWER

I am advised by the Department of Family and Community Services that the underspend described occurred principally in 2011/12 and is related to expenditure on non-service delivery activities, the costs of which are attributed to each Service Group.

QUESTION 20 – PAGE 22

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: The short answer is, yes, after a period. I was wracking my brains to remember what that period is. I used to know. If someone is out for a week of leave we do not backfill them, if they are out for a longer period we do. The approach we have taken to that has not changed for a number of years.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can I clarify that you do that in every case? Can you provide to the Committee what the arrangements are, such as more than a week then you do, but can you confirm that on notice?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes.

ANSWER

Refer to Supplementary Question on Notice 35.

QUESTION 21 – PAGE 22

Ms JAN BARHAM: I will move on to ask about community housing transfers. How many additional community housing dwellings were delivered in 2013-14 as a result of the transfer of public housing properties to community housing providers?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Community housing is a really important part of the social housing system. Community housing providers provide great assistance. They have had properties transferred to them. They often manage tenancies and that is part of the broader role they play in providing housing to vulnerable people. You have a specific question about the number and I will ask the Secretary to answer the question.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: From memory it is 1,800 during the course of 2013-14. As at June 2014 title to 5,818 properties has been transferred to 16 registered community housing providers. Those properties were all funded under the Commonwealth's Economic Stimulus Plan (Nation Building). I am happy to confirm on notice the number of titles that were transferred in the 2013-14 financial year.

ANSWER

I am advised by the Department of Family and Community Services that in 2013/14, titles to around 1300 properties were transferred to community housing providers and approximately another 1400 properties were approved for transfer in early July 2014.

QUESTION 22 – PAGE 22 - 23

Ms JAN BARHAM: Are you able to advise on future transfers? There is now a lower House inquiry looking at tenancy management. Is this a process of moving towards a wholesale release of Government public housing to the community housing sector? What I think people are interested to know, and have the right to know, is the contractual arrangement for leveraging capacity and the provision of support services. Are you able to give any information or will you take that on notice?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: There was a gentleman's agreement between jurisdictions around the time of the nation building stimulus. There was invitation from the Commonwealth that States and Territories had the opportunity to transfer up to 35 per cent of their public housing stock into the community housing sector. New South Wales has transferred some, but not all, of that proportion and there has been considerable work done in the recent period to develop options for consideration by Government around the balance of that. That is work in progress.

The properties that were transferred under the nation building stimulus recently did have initially a "best endeavours". Community housing providers would offer their best endeavours to borrow against the income stream and the assets to build more, and they were progressively converted into tighter contractual commitments between community housing providers and the Government. I need to take on notice whether there remain any of those still to be concluded, but from memory most, if not all, have now been done.

ANSWER

I am advised by the Department of Family and Community Services that the requirement for community housing providers to deliver new affordable housing is a condition attached to the title of the properties that have been transferred. All successful providers have now signed up to contractual requirements which require them to leverage over 1200 new dwellings for low to moderate income households by 2021.

QUESTION 23 – PAGE 23

Ms JAN BARHAM: This was raised in the housing inquiry: Is it possible that one of those contracts could be made available so we can see how you are doing it?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: To examine the components?

Ms JAN BARHAM: Good contract writing is what is going to deliver the outcome.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I see no reason why we would not make that available. The terms of the contract and the allocation of responsibility we could certainly make available.

ANSWER:

The Vesting of Capital Properties Agreement and the Common Terms and Conditions to Community Housing Agreement will be provided to the Honourable Member for information.

QUESTION 24 – PAGE 24

Ms JAN BARHAM: Last year it was indicated that an evaluation of Common Ground had commenced. What is happening with that? Are there any plans to roll out more of that style of successful housing model for people in need? Has the evaluation been done or is it available?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I will take that question on notice. I will let you know when the evaluation will be ready. It is our practice to proactively publish any evaluation of publicly funded services.

ANSWER

I am advised by the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) that the In-depth Evaluation of Common Ground Sydney is being conducted through a two phased reporting approach. The first phase, being a Baseline Report, was completed in June 2013. The second phase, the final report, has not yet been finalised. FACS will consider the findings of relevant evaluations when considering the development and delivery of different housing and homelessness programs.

QUESTION 25 – PAGE 26

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: The question stands as it is. As I understand, we have a rolling average of 187 caseworker vacancies. I am establishing the value of that.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: We are happy to provide on notice the salary and on-costs of 187 caseworkers.

ANSWER

Employee related costs are reported in the Department of Family and Community Services Annual Report which is available at www.facs.nsw.gov.au

QUESTION 26 – PAGE 26

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I return to my earlier question about the relief of caseworkers. I understand that the answer given was that they are relieved.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Is that the case?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: They are relieved after a period of time. I would need to check and come back to you on notice what that period of time is.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: How does that square with the Ernst and Young report that you are well familiar with and which we have discussed in previous hearings? The report said that they are not replaced.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: It is a big report and it has been a long time since I had to read it closely. I am more than happy to respond if you table the part of the report that relates to your question.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I say it is in the report. I would be grateful if you would explain why there seems to be a variance between what you have said and what is in that report.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: We will do our best.

ANSWER

Refer to Supplementary Question on Notice 35.

QUESTION 27 – PAGE 28 - 29

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Are you able to provide the amount that was spent on motel accommodation?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I am not sure, but if we can break it down by accommodation type we will provide it to you.

ANSWER

Refer to Supplementary Question on Notice 200.

QUESTION 28 – PAGE 29

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: You said that there is slightly more budgeted for this year. Are you expecting the same proportion to be spent again on motel accommodation?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: As I say, I do not know about the composition of the expenditure across temporary accommodation types. I will have to take that on notice.

ANSWER

Refer to Supplementary Question on Notice 200.

QUESTION 29 – PAGE 29

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Could you tell the Committee what the average length of time is that people spend in a motel before they are able to access long-term housing?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Again, I am not sure whether we hold data in that form, but if we do we will provide it to you.

ANSWER

Refer to Supplementary Question on Notice 200.

QUESTION 30 – PAGE 29

Ms JAN BARHAM: If I can follow up on Mr Donnelly's question, I am aware of places that are allowing people to park in car parks on the North Coast. During Homeless Persons Week, Homelessness NSW put a call out with three priority issues they thought needed to be addressed. One of them was about investment in street counts, and I think this is what this issue goes to. Is there a commitment to ensure that we better understand the numbers of people who are homeless and the various types of homelessness? In coastal areas we know there is lots of overcrowding.

I have heard a story about young people who live in a share house and work in the hospitality industry. Whoever gets enough work that week gets to have a bedroom; the others sleep on the floor or on a couch. These are unusual ways for people to be living and I think there needs to be some research and understanding of it, and Homelessness NSW put that forward. Did you respond to that request for better capturing of the data?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Another important aspect of the Going Home Staying Home reforms is that there are requirements for people assistance; so, in other words, a measurement of those services that are provided against criteria. What we will be moving to, which is important, is a way of measuring the effectiveness of those services when they are provided. So these new reforms also provide that dimension. As I have said before in this Committee, spending money is important but we need to measure the impact of that money, and these reforms are being rolled out and measured in such a way that we will have a better sense of what is effective and how our service providers are tracking against what the public money that has been given to them for good effect is being used on.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I do not know whether we have provided a specific response to that request from Homelessness NSW. The Going Home Staying Home reforms that embed a common assessment tool across the whole of the system will mean that there is better quality and more consistent data about demand. But I am happy to take the question on notice and respond more completely.

ANSWER

The NSW Government is supportive of efforts by local government to improve understanding of homelessness in their local area and, more broadly, supports initiatives from local councils and other sectors which support efforts to prevent or reduce homelessness.

More information about the NSW Government's Going Home Staying Home reform is available on the Housing NSW website at:

<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Help+with+Housing/Homelessness/Going+Home+Staying+Home/Going+Home+Staying+Home.htm>

QUESTION 31 – PAGE 30

Ms JAN BARHAM: We have still got a relatively high unit cost for the delivery. I am trying to understand why the cost of some of these houses is so high. I previously understood it was because everything was coming from Sydney out to the regions, which does not seem to me to be a very holistic approach, particularly when we know in other States there are programs that look at value-adding with training and Aboriginal workforce programs rather than city people going out to the country to deliver expensive homes.

Ms YOUNG: We deliver our services through the Land and Housing Corporation in an agreement with them, which are delivered through their contracting. However, we work with them around an Aboriginal employment agreement. There is a 20 per cent Aboriginal employment target within that. We exceed that and our average is 27 per cent. The primary work is done by Aboriginal builders where that is the case. The unit cost can be particularly high in remote areas with the cost of getting the materials out there. We are always looking at new ways of delivering options and we certainly work very closely with the Land and Housing Corporation about some of those options.

For example, we have recently been delivering some units that have been built by Corrective Services Industries. That has been working with Corrective Services to give inmates training opportunities. We are delivering some in Coonamble at the moment, we have delivered a couple in Walgett and there are some that are going to be delivered in Baradine in the next few months. That is a really exciting opportunity for us in terms of giving some people some skills. The problem with that is sometimes that costs a little bit more because of the nature of what we are trying to do.

Ms JAN BARHAM: Is this information on the website, or is there a reporting process around this to show more of a whole-of-government approach? Is it unreasonable to expect that there would be?

Ms YOUNG: As I understand it, the detail of the information would not be but we are certainly happy to provide more information.

ANSWER

More information is available from the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) website at www.facs.nsw.gov.au

QUESTION 32 – PAGE 30 – 31

Ms JAN BARHAM: I do not see any reporting on it.

Ms YOUNG: We have reporting on our unit costs within our annual report, which is publicly available, but the detail around the programs is probably not there. We are happy to provide that.

ANSWER

Refer to Transcript Question on Notice 31.

QUESTION 33 – PAGE 31

Ms JAN BARHAM: Thank you, that would be appreciated. I turn now—I cannot find the page—to the forced adoption practices and delivery of the three-year program. How is that going and where is it up to? I think we are entering the final year. Again, it is a complication with all government department websites being different. It would be easier if they all had a uniform "where to find" thing. On some websites it is very difficult to find information or it is a bit of a matrix. I would like to see the Post Adoption Resource Centre [PARC] information and reporting because concerns were raised about whether it would be able to do outreach work. I am interested to know how many people were supported and how many regional people, if that is available.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I will ask Ms Walk to respond to your question, but obviously an important part of what these Houses of Parliament did was make an apology to the parents and children who were affected by past forced adoption policies. I was proud to do that as a member of Parliament and as a Minister at that time. Obviously it reflected a great concern across the community. Pleasingly, we are ahead of the Commonwealth Government and have been able to do that. We are taking some practical measures and I will ask Ms Walk to address them.

Ms WALK: I have in front of me the projections for 2014-15 but not necessarily how they went in 2013-14. Because of previous experience, I know that the Post Adoption Resource Centre has a detailed way of reporting on a quarterly basis, and I am quite certain it would be happy to pass those details to you. Let me read out what it is intending to do—this would have been based on its projections from the previous year so it may give an indication of its extra commitments. Telephone and email support sessions, 3,209. The centre does a lot of email counselling. That may well be people who live outside New South Wales but the adoption took place in New South Wales for the birth parent or the young person themselves. It did face-to-face counselling of 5,082 clients. That would be people who attended their Hurstville office. It provided intermediary services—where they act as an intermediary—for 84 clients.

There were 11 information meetings and workshops across New South Wales, and they would be largely in regional areas; one or two of them would be in the metropolitan area. We can get a breakdown for you about where they took place.

ANSWER

I am advised by the Department of Family and Community Services that the Post Adoption Resource Centre (PARC) has been successful at outreach to regional hubs with NSW. Information meetings were held in regional hubs across NSW in 2012/13, including Albury, Bega, Canberra, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Lismore, Newcastle, Parramatta and Port Macquarie.

PARC has not yet reported data for the 2013/14 period.