



**Special Minister of State
Minister for Commerce
Minister for Industrial Relations
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Assistant Treasurer
Vice President of the Executive Council**

Tanya Bosch
The Director
Budget Estimates
Room 812
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Streets
SYDNEY NSW 2000

10 October 2005

Dear Ms Bosch

Budget Estimates 2005-2006 – Questions taken on notice

Thank you for your correspondence relating to my appearance before General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 for the portfolio areas of Ageing, Disability and Home Care Services on Thursday, 22 September 2005.

Please find attached a response to the five Questions on Notice taken during the Budget Estimates Hearing.

Yours sincerely

John Della Bosca MLC

**MINISTER FOR AGEING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
22 SEPTEMBER 2005**

ISSUE – SENIORS INFORMATION SERVICE TENDER

QON 1 SENIORS INFORMATION SERVICE TENDER – The Hon Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans asked the Minister for Disability Services and the Minister for Ageing:

QUESTION

The seniors phone information service being operated by COTA, I understand, has been put up for tender. Could this just become a call centre and, if so, will it be in New South Wales and will there be any need or obligation for the successful tenderer to actually employ older people or disabled people?

ANSWER

The current contract with the Council on the Ageing has been completed and, given the amount of money involved with such a service, a new contract is required. The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care has engaged the Department of Commerce to assist with the tendering process. The Department has issued a joint tender for the Seniors Information Service and the Seniors Card Call Centre, which is a parallel service for older people in the community. The tender allows applicants to respond in a variety of ways, either to provide one of these services or to provide both.

The tender specification makes it quite clear that the key features of the Seniors Information Service, that it provides a sensitive and confidential service where actual people answer the phone, is to be maintained as the core concept of the service.

Tenderers are required to employ people with the skills and experience to provide the service as specified. It is expected that the successful tenderer would employ people with skill in working with older people and communicating effectively with them.

State Contracts Policy provides that services provided in New South Wales can be provided from elsewhere in Australia, but not outside Australia. This is a requirement of the Commonwealth Government's Competition Policy. This has been made clear to potential tenderers.

QUESTION

But you might know the conditions on the tender. Could it end up in India?

ANSWER

No

QUESTION

Will you guarantee that people will be employed in New South Wales trying to meet this tender? Obviously you can get two bites of the cherry. You can employ some people to help them and you can get a service. If you put it outside New South Wales then obviously the people in New South Wales who might have been employed will presumably be on welfare from either you or the Federal Government, might they not, with that income loss?

ANSWER

As indicated above, the service could potentially be provided from elsewhere in Australia. The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the Department of Commerce will carefully consider all tender responses against the specific criteria in the tender. These are:

- (a) Demonstrated expertise and experience in the successful provision of the specified or similar services on a similar scale.
- (b) Human resource availability, capacity, skills and experience, particularly in relation to key staff to be utilised for the purposes of this Contract.
- (c) Quality and availability of back up and support services.
- (d) An understanding of the aims, objectives and operations of the service/s and the needs of older people.
- (e) Tenderer's current commitments and availability to undertake the service for the term specified.
- (f) The adequacy of the telephone and related communications system including capacity to record data and report on calls.
- (g) Tenderer's proposed training plan.
- (h) Provision of a project plan with specific timeframes for implementation.
- (i) Quality management systems in place.
- (j) Degree of compliance with the technical and contractual requirements of

this tender.

- (k) Tenderer's financial capacity to perform the contract.
- (l) Compliance with applicable NSW Government Procurement Policies, legislation and standards
- (m) Existing or potential capacity of the tendered item to fit with the NSW Government's Better Service Delivery Program.
- (n) Price/value-for-money

QUESTION

You will not give a commitment here that you are going to employ people in New South Wales?

ANSWER

The Department is required to evaluate all tender responses on their merits in terms of the specified criteria and in compliance with Government policy. The Department will ensure that the best applicant is awarded the tender.

John Della Bosca MLC

**MINISTER FOR AGEING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
22 SEPTEMBER 2005**

ISSUE – CAPITAL GRANTS

QON 2 CAPITAL GRANTS – The Reverend the Hon Fred Nile asked the Minister for Disability Services and the Minister for Ageing:

QUESTION 1

he question related to the increase in capital grants for non-profit organisations from \$1.2M in 2004-05 to \$5.6M in the current year.

ANSWER 1

The increase is represented by an amount of \$4.5M to be paid to the Gosford Council to upgrade the infrastructure at Peat Island.

QUESTION 2

The number of non-profit organisations who received capital grants.

ANSWER 2

A total of eighteen (18) non-profit organisations received Disability Service capital grants in 2004/05 at a total cost of \$0.799M. Forty-five (45) non-profit organisations received \$0.936M in Disability Service capital grants in 2003/04.

John Della Bosca MLC

**MINISTER FOR AGEING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
22 SEPTEMBER 2005**

ISSUE – \$2.2m RESPITE FUNDS

QON 3 RESPITE FUNDS – The Hon John Ryan asked the Minister for Disability Services and the Minister for Ageing:

QUESTION

When you allocated \$2.2 million for respite this year, how many beds did you think that would unblock?

Why pick 2.2 as a figure? What was the planning behind that, or was there no plan? Was it a figure just plucked out of the air?

ANSWER

The additional \$2.2 million allocated for 2005/06 is part of the Government's overall commitment to respite services in New South Wales.

Funding for respite care has doubled since 1996, with a total investment of more than \$158 million last financial year.

The New South Wales Government has recently agreed to an additional \$48 million over three years in joint funding with the Commonwealth for respite for older carers. This funding will deliver at least 1000 respite places ranging from limited to intensive support.

John Della Bosca MLC

**MINISTER FOR AGEING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
22 SEPTEMBER 2005**

**ISSUE – SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A
DISABILITY**

QON No. 4 SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY – The Hon John Ryan asked the Minister for Disability Services and the Minister for Ageing:

QUESTION

The Ombudsman tabled a report in Parliament with regard to children's services and at the conclusion of that report it referred to an update to be given to the Ombudsman in January of this year, and possibly subsequent updates. Could you provide that information to the committee or at least that report as a table of your report for the committee so that we can see what happened as a result of the Ombudsman's recommendations?

ANSWER

In response to the Ombudsman's report on the need for the Department of Ageing, Disability, and Home Care to improve services for children and young people, the Department developed the *Improving services for children and young people and families: Action plan* (Action Plan). The Government committed \$30.6 million over four years to benefit children and young people with a disability as part of this plan.

The Department is developing and implementing new policies and procedures, and providing additional training for staff working with children and young people.

The Department has consulted widely with non-government organisations and disability advocacy organisations to develop the framework for new services that will:

- Assist families to build capacity over time;
- Provide short-term intensive supports to assist during stressful periods; and
- Provide additional alternative family base care services.

The Department has conducted two-day training sessions for non-government staff working with children and young people with a disability in 14 locations across NSW on the implementation of the *Children's Standards in Action*. The Department has also conducted staff training on identifying and responding to 'risk of harm' and will shortly be recruiting and appointing 20 children's case work specialists to further improve the services provided to children and young people with a disability and their families.

John Della Bosca MLC

**MINISTER FOR AGEING
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
22 SEPTEMBER 2005**

**ISSUE – NUMBER OF APPLICANTS FOR ACCOMMODATION
VACANCIES**

QON 5 NUMBER OF APPLICANTS FOR ACCOMMODATION VACANCIES –
The Hon John Ryan asked the Minister for Disability Services and the Minister for Ageing:

QUESTION

How many people did you assess that missed out, because obviously there are always more applications than there are vacancies and I accept that some people might even apply a multiple number of times, but how many people, in rough terms, were assessed for the available number of vacancies that you had during the course of the year?

ANSWER

Regional vacancy management processes generally capture vacancies that occur in group homes provided by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the funded sector. Each client who requests accommodation support is assessed and a client profile is developed. When a vacancy occurs, a profile is created of the group home. Client profiles are matched to house profiles. When there is a match, the client is short-listed for the vacancy pending the decision of Regional Placement Committees. Decisions are made according to the prioritisation criteria, such as risk of homelessness.

Based on information obtained from Regions, in 2004/05:

99 vacancies were identified across the government and non-government sector.

976 clients requested accommodation support.

337 clients were short-listed for these vacancies, i.e. their client profile matched the house profile.

99 clients were placed in group homes.

238 short-listed clients were not placed.

John Della Bosca MLC