

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – FROM HEARING TRANSCRIPT

QUESTION 1 - PAGE 4

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: What is it in dollar terms over the forward estimates? As an agency, how much money do you have to save over the forward estimates?

Mr MOORE: There are a range of measures, as I said, in terms of efficiency dividends: the labour expense cap and there are some procurement reforms. I am happy to have those dug out and collated for you, but there is not a single target at all.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: We are happy for you to take that on notice.

...

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: To be very clear, you say that the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet has not set any savings targets outside the 1.2 per cent? Minister, have you set any savings targets for your agency?

Ms PRU GOWARD: No, apart from the 1.2 per cent and the efficiency dividend that has been in place for a number of years.

Mr MOORE: And a few other relatively minor whole-of-public-sector savings requirements, a few savings measures that have been announced. Those are the things that I said we would provide to you on notice so that you have a detailed assessment of just what they were. The executive of the Department of Family and Community Services in no way requested the sorts of documents that you have in front of you.

ANSWER

Current savings measures for 2012/13 are:

| Initiative | \$'000 |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Efficiency Dividend | 82,440 |
| Labour Expense Cap | 23,449 |
| ICT & Procurement Savings | 11,635 |
| Other | 4,700 |
| Total | 122,224 |

More than 70 per cent of the total savings measures for 2012/13 relate to measures imposed by previous Labor governments, including efficiency dividends and ICT savings.

The actual amount of savings and efficiency measures over the forward estimates will be determined as part of the Budget process for the relevant future year.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services

Minister for Women

QUESTION 2 - PAGE 6

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: There is a document from within your agency entitled "Filling vacant positions in regions and helpline procedures and guidelines". It refers on the second page to the regional caseworker vacancy and candidate data. This document was reviewed most recently on 30 June this year. It clearly states that your agency records regional caseworker vacancies. What is the vacancy rate in Bourke? I am happy for you to take the question on notice. Do you or the director general have any idea how many front-line staff—

Ms PRU GOWARD: I can take the question on notice, but Bourke is not a region.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I know it is a community services centre. You must know how many people you have on the ground.

CHAIR: Perhaps the Minister can take the question on notice.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: It is a ridiculous proposition that no-one in this room knows the caseworker vacancy rate at the Bourke Community Services Centre or anywhere else in the State.

CHAIR: Can the question in relation to Bourke be taken on notice and a response provided?

Mr MOORE: It will take some effort, but we are happy to provide material showing vacancy levels in the best way that they can be measured. However, as I tried to point out earlier, we do not focus on vacancies. The critical management information is around expenditure on salary.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I am happy for you to provide on notice the regional caseworker vacancy and candidate data reports for the past financial year. This document states that it includes the numbers of all vacancies and eligibility and transfer data for each location in the region.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: I want to be very clear that no-one in this room can tell the Committee the caseworker vacancies in high-need areas such as Bourke, Moree and Narrabri. They are currently overseeing Toomelah. It is beyond belief that no-one can tell the Committee the vacancy rates in these high-need areas. Is that not your core business?

Mr MOORE: In answer to the first question, I can say precisely how many staff there are in total and I can tell you very quickly how many staff there are in particular locations. I asked the indulgence of the Committee earlier to understand that what may seem a simple question cannot be answered easily. The simple sum that the member indicated should be provided cannot be provided quickly with any real meaning because the establishment data system is, to be precise, rubbish. It is a reflection of historical whims and processes and different management models in different locations. It has not been cleaned up in recent times so that the establishment reflects the level of

funding that has been made available. Instead of going down the path of investing in new systems of old-fashioned establishment management, we are looking at managing our processes around expenditure and what is available in salary dollars and focusing on whether they are adequate or need to be redeployed. Because it is not where we are heading, it is not easy to answer the question "What is the exact establishment in a particular location?" The answer could be wrong or meaningless for a variety of reasons. However, as I indicated, if it is an issue of such interest to the Committee we could provide some form of meaningful data. In terms of addressing the priority issues around particular locations, that is an area in which we use management to provide advice about what sorts of initiatives, including additional resources, are necessary to address problems. We do not manage it by sitting looking at computers and reading establishment numbers that we know are rubbish or sitting in Ashfield or the CBD trying to run Bourke by looking at numbers in computers. We deal with real people and real managers to establish redeployment priorities.

CHAIR: You will provide information about current meaningful reporting structures to the Committee?

Mr MOORE: Certainly.

ANSWER

The Department of Family and Community Services does not publish or track state-wide data on caseworker vacancy rates. Community Services continues to monitor caseworker positions, not vacancies.

Recruitment is and always has been based on meeting service delivery requirements.

Caseworker numbers go up and down all the time. They always have. There is no freeze on frontline caseworker recruitment. There never has been.

There has been no cut to the number of child protection caseworker positions since the election of the O'Farrell Government. Around 2,200 Community Services caseworkers turn up for work every day across NSW – the same as when the former government was in office.

FACS knows how many caseworkers are working on the ground. In Bourke, there were two caseworkers on 30 June 2012, the same as under the former government in June 2010.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services
Minister for Women

QUESTION 3 - PAGE 7

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: How many children in care were restored to their families?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I will take that question on notice.

ANSWER

In 2011/12, 1,164 children and young persons who left Out-of-Home Care were restored to parents, at least once.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services

Minister for Women

QUESTION 4 - PAGE 7

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I would like to revisit the further savings strategies document. You say the document has no status or standing within the agency. Presumably whoever wrote it did not simply wake up one day and decide to set down some thoughts on a piece of paper. Who gave the direction to look at savings and to prepare this document?

Ms PRU GOWARD: It was not authored by me so I invite the Director General to answer that.

Mr MOORE: I will take on notice the sourcing of precisely how that document came to be commissioned. I absolutely would not expect it to be as you thought it would not be, that is, someone waking up on a whim. The Community Services agency within the Department of Family and Community Services has been refining and improving ways in which it focuses on financial management because that is a critical part of being able to be an effective organisation. While I have welcomed the steps that it has taken to get its house in order around those matters, as I was indicating to the Committee earlier, the way in which those responsibilities have been executed are ones that are misconceived. The chief executive and I have been working on alternative structures and arrangements—

ANSWER

The document in question was a draft version of a working paper that was being prepared for the Department of Family and Community Services' Executive.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services

Minister for Women

QUESTION 5 - PAGE 9

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: Will you advise about after-care services and, in particular, leaving care plans? Will we see an improvement? Is part of their contract to ensure an improved service with leaving care plans?

Ms PRU GOWARD: Of course leaving care plans are very important and it is one of the areas where we really let children down before, which are why we had such large percentages of them going into Juvenile Justice and homelessness. Leaving care contracts are a very important part of well-managed foster care, again an issue we believe will be much better managed by the non-government organisation sector.

Ms WALK: Every child and young person in out-of-home care statutorily should have a leaving care plan from 15 years of age. Unfortunately, as you know, often children who are in Community Services care do not have a leaving care plan. What Community Services has done about that is to introduce a revised standard case plan framework and template—I saw it recently—which assists our case workers to ensure that leaving care is considered the key objective of each and every case plan for a 15-year-old in out-of-home care. The transfer of out-of-home care to our accredited non-government partners has commenced. Non government out-of-home care service providers will have increased responsibility to ensure timely leaving care plans. Ms Boland might like to talk about the standards of leaving care plans. Non-government agencies already have a much better track record unfortunately than Community Services in actually having leaving care plans that are not only plans but also that plans are actually put into action with both the carers and the children and young people.

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: Have we seen an improvement in the past reporting year?

Ms WALK: In terms of the actual number of leaving care plans?

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: The provision of leaving care plans? Previously it was a very low number of about 18 per cent. Have we seen an improvement? What is the financial contribution to after care?

Ms PRU GOWARD: There have only been 199 transferred so this process is just beginning and I do not think we are in a position this year to let you know if there has been a significant improvement in the leaving care plans outcome for children in foster care. Another year and we should start to see the results.

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: In terms of annual reporting about the level of provision of plans?

Ms WALK: I prefer to take that one notice.

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: I will put it on notice as I did last year to keep tracking it.

ANSWER

Community Services does not have a reliable way of measuring the number of young people in statutory OOHC with a leaving care plan.

From December 2012, a specific question relating to leaving care planning will be included as part of a new case plan record. This will make reporting on this measure more robust in the future.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services

Minister for Women

QUESTION 6 - PAGE 9

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: What is the allocation for the Protecting Aboriginal Children Together program? Are you able to advise if any of this money is going towards Toomelah? What specific actions are being taken to address the situation at Toomelah?

Ms PRU GOWARD: Protecting Aboriginal Children Together [PACT] is a fantastic initiative and I certainly met the PACT team in Moree, which services Toomelah, and I think it is going to make a tremendous difference. I think I might have to take on notice if you want the number of caseworkers in the PACT program.

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: Yes. I am looking at the overall investment and breakdown of information you have around that, in particular, to Toomelah.

Ms PRU GOWARD: I am going to have to take the number of people working in PACT on notice.

ANSWER

The Protecting Aboriginal Children Together (PACT) budget for 2012/13 is \$2.08 million for the two services located in Shellharbour and Moree.

The Moree PACT team includes a manager, three advisors as well as administrative support. PACT advisors will work alongside Community Services' Caseworkers, and with families who are subject to Child Protection intervention by Community Services.

The PACT team has participated in Community Services Interagency Case Discussions forums, specifically convened to review Toomelah cases, and Moree CSC's practice group which reviews Toomelah child protection cases.

The Moree CSC will also request that the PACT service participate in Aboriginal consultations as an external consultant to cases relating to Toomelah families.

The PACT team is in the early stages of operation.

The Moree CSC also has two dedicated caseworkers to work with the Toomelah community as part of an Interagency Short Term Action Plan for the area. Lead by NSW Health, the plan will deliver a better approach to providing Government services in Toomelah and Boggabilla.

Pru Goward MP

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Minister for Women

QUESTION 7 - PAGE 10

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: Is the information around that short-term interagency action plan publicly available? What is being done? Is there a large figure allocated?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I might ask Mr Allen to answer that.

Mr ALLEN: We can certainly take that as a question on notice and provide some details of the range of actions that are being undertaken in Toomelah working with that community and working with the other government departments that are part of the interagency group.

ANSWER

The Department of Family and Community Services has consulted with the NSW Land Council, Toomelah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) and Boggabilla community members to develop initiatives under the Interagency Short Term Action Plan.

Community members have also been engaged to work with the survey teams to assess each property in Toomelah. Subsequently, emergency health and safety repairs have been undertaken by NSW Health and further housing upgrades will be undertaken by the Aboriginal Housing Office on a priority basis.

The Toomelah LALC has also entered into a headlease agreement with the Aboriginal Housing Office under the Build and Grow Aboriginal Community Housing Strategy and the properties have been subleased to an approved Aboriginal Community Housing provider. The headleasing also means that repairs and maintenance on the properties can begin to bring the houses to a clean and safe standard.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services
Minister for Women

QUESTION 8 - PAGE 12

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Would the same explanation apply to another item in the budget papers—community development and support—if there is a 50 per cent cut in that area? Does that relate to the Federal Government as well?

Mr MOORE: In that case, no, it does not go back to a change of responsibility of the Commonwealth and State. It comes back within the Family and Community Services cluster, and we are better aligning where funds are placed against programs. When the Family and Community Services cluster first came into being the budget assignment amongst various programs was not as accurate as it could be. What you see in terms of the community development and support program and the decline in budget assigned to that program is due to a decrease because of the transfer of homeless programs to another part of the Family and Community Services cluster, so we are accounting against a different program now, and in 2011-12 the cost of what was then known as the Office of Women's Policy, which was about \$6 million, was assigned to a community services program, when it was inappropriately located there. For this budget we have moved that money across into a central program area. So these changes are not reflective of reductions in activity, just a different way of accounting for the activity. If it assists you, given there are lots of ons and offs, what we would be able to do on notice is give you a table that maps out where these things have moved around so that it is much clearer for you.

ANSWER

There have been a number of movements across Family and Community Services Service Groups. Following is an explanation for Service Groups with material changes.

Community Development and Support

Decrease of \$142 million in Community Development and Support is the result of the following key movements:

- Transfer of Specialist Homelessness Services under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness and the National Affordable Housing Agreement to Housing NSW, total transfer of \$158 million.
- Increase in Commonwealth funding for Aboriginal Child and Family Centres of \$9.3 million and minor program variations of \$6.7 million.

Community Support for People with a Disability, their Family and Carers

Decrease in expenditure of \$479 million for Community Support for People with a Disability, their Family and Carers is the result of the following key movements:

- Change in funding responsibility for basic community care between the Commonwealth and NSW Governments, decrease of \$423.8 million.
- Re-allocation of funding (\$55.2 million) to Supported Accommodation for People with a Disability due to the change in the methodology used to allocate costs between service groups.

Supported Accommodation for People with a Disability

Increase of \$198 million in Supported Accommodation is the result of the following key movements:

- Additional funding for *Stronger Together 2* initiatives and indexation (\$60 million).
- Re-allocation of funding to Supported Accommodation due to the change in methodology used to allocate costs between service groups and the change in the allocation of Packaged and Aged Care funding, this resulted in a combined net increase of \$138 million.

Child, Youth and Family Prevention and Early Intervention Services

Decrease of \$37 million is the result of the following key movements:

- Transfer of \$85 million funding associated with Brighter Futures casework to Strengthening Families Program within the Statutory Child Protection program.
- Transfer in of grants funding of \$48 million from the Statutory Child Protection program targeting early intervention services.

Housing Policy and Assistance

Increase of \$87.3 million is the result of the following key movements:

- Transfer of Specialist Homelessness Services under the National Partnership on Homelessness and the National Affordable Housing Agreement to Housing NSW, total transfer of \$158 million.
- Impacts associated with the transfer of functions to the Department of Finance and Services associated with the Land and Housing Corporation (Net Estimate - \$71 million).

Pru Goward MP

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Minister for Women

QUESTION 9 - PAGE 20

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I am happy for you to take this question on notice. I would like the figures for all the things that you say have been transferred so that I can run through the numbers myself. The efficiency dividend savings that you conceded earlier were being made are still in your cluster. The further savings strategy document quantifies them across the forward estimates for Community Services as \$683 million. Is that figure correct? If it is not, what is the correct figure for the efficiency dividend savings across the forward estimates, including for the current financial year?

Mr HUNTER: The efficiency dividend savings measure is about \$400 million.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Across the forward estimates?

Mr HUNTER: For Family and Community Services.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Can I have that broken down by year? I am happy to have that question taken on notice.

Mr HUNTER: Yes.

ANSWER

The efficiency dividend amount, over the forward estimates, relates to budget allocation reductions which were initiated by previous Labor governments including in the October 2010 allocation letter and commenced in 2011/12.

The cumulative efficiency dividend savings over the forward estimates (2012/13 - 2015/16) for the Family and Community Services cluster is \$412 million.

The efficiency dividend for 2012/13 is \$82.4 million and \$109.9 million each year from 2013/14.

Pru Goward MP

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Minister for Women

QUESTION 10 - PAGE 21

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: When will the Brewarrina safe house be completed and operational?

Ms PRU GOWARD: As you might be aware, there have been some difficulties in beginning that work. I will ask Mr Allen, who is head of Housing NSW, to provide a more detailed answer.

Mr ALLEN: We have been in the process of constructing safe houses in those three locations. The Wilcannia safe house has been completed and the Bourke safe house is nearing completion. There have been considerable difficulties in delivering the safe house at Brewarrina. A number of sites have been identified.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I am interested in the timing.

Mr ALLEN: A number of different views have been expressed in the community about the most appropriate location.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: To cut to the chase, last year I asked about the funding for this project and I sought assurances that the director position would be funded until the safe houses were operational. That question was taken on notice and the response stated that all safe houses are operational. From what you and the Minister have said, the safe houses at Bourke and Brewarrina are not operational. Why was the Committee misled in that answer?

Mr ALLEN: You have me at a disadvantage. I do not recall the answer that was provided to that question on notice. I am happy to take that further. However, the Brewarrina safe house is the subject of further consultation with the Brewarrina community.

CHAIR: I ask the Hon. Adam Searle to table that document. It will be forwarded to you, Mr Allen.

ANSWER

The Community Services statement that “All of the five Safe Houses are operational” was correct. Safe Houses have been operating in the five localities of Lightning Ridge, Bourke, Wilcannia, Brewarrina with the support of the NSW Government since 2001.

In 2011, the NSW Government was successful in a bid to use funding through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing to improve the Orana Far West Safe House Program. This included the constructing of new crisis accommodation, new transitional houses and exit

houses in each of the five areas. Safe Houses have remained operational in each of the five areas during the delivery of the new program.

Building work has been completed in Wilcannia, Walgett and Lightning Ridge and the new complex in Bourke will also be completed by late 2012. However, there have been delays in progressing the Brewarrina Safe House Project.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services

Minister for Women

QUESTION 11 - PAGE 21

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: I would like an explanation of the decrease in funding to the Aboriginal Housing Office from \$122.9 million in 2011-12 to \$110.7 million in 2012-13.

Mr ALLEN: The funding for the Aboriginal Housing Office is substantially affected by the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. The funding for that State-Federal partnership differs across the years of the forward estimates. That would account substantially for the difference in the funding arrangements. I am happy to take that as a question on notice.

ANSWER

The primary reason for this variation is due to the funding under the National Partnership Agreement Remote Indigenous Housing. Variances may occur year to year as various stages of agreed programs are implemented. The total program funding of \$398 million is fixed and is being provided over 10 years.

Pru Goward MP

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QUESTION 12 - PAGE 26

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: I understand that KPMG held a public meeting in Dubbo to consult with stakeholders in western New South Wales. Can you advise when that meeting was held?

Ms PRU GOWARD: We can, and if we can just go through the papers here we can get you the date; do you know the date?

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: Was the meeting open to the public?

Ms PRU GOWARD: We will just get you those details. Would you like us to take it on notice to save time?

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: Yes, I will give you a number of questions: Was the meeting open to the public? How many members of the public attended? How many government agency staff attended?

ANSWER

A Domestic and Family Violence Framework consultation was held in Dubbo on 20 September 2012. This formed part of a broader set of consultations planned with the sector to assist in the development of a new Domestic and Family Violence Framework.

The meeting was not intended to be public. Invitees were representatives from both government and non-government agencies who operate in the Domestic and Family Violence sector.

Nine government agency staff attended.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services

Minister for Women

QUESTION 13 - PAGE 31

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: How many centres do you anticipate being in operation by 2013?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I do not think we have any plans at this stage to expand the program but we certainly want to maintain the services we have.

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: Can you make that list available?

Ms PRU GOWARD: Yes.

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: Is there a Lismore service?

Ms PRU GOWARD: No, there is not one at Lismore.

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: I will put that on notice.

ANSWER

There will be 23 Staying Home Leaving Violence Centres operating in 2013 at: Bega, Blacktown, Campbelltown, Cessnock, Dubbo, Eastern Sydney, Fairfield, Gosford, Holroyd, Kempsey, Lake Macquarie, Liverpool, Maitland, Moree, Newcastle, Nowra, Parramatta, Penrith, Redfern, Tamworth, Walgett, Wollongong and Wyong.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services

Minister for Women

QUESTION 14 - PAGE 31

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: I asked some questions last year about this program (Start Safely Program) and there was confusion about the amount listed in a press release and the amount shown in the budget. I think the budget figure last year was \$4 million. Is the figure of \$2.7 million for 2012-13? What was the figure for last year and can you advise how it was delivered, or what was delivered?

Ms PRU GOWARD: We will take that on notice because there still seems to be some confusion.

ANSWER

A total amount of \$16 million has been allocated under the Start Safely program over four years to provide assistance to households leaving domestic and family violence.

In 2011/12, 717 clients were assisted and the total expenditure was \$2.7 million.

Start Safely delivers a subsidy for short to medium term financial help, mostly to women (with or without children), who are leaving domestic or family violence so they can secure accommodation in the private rental market.

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