



The Hon. John Ajaka MLC
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for the Illawarra

Mr Stewart Smith
Director
Budget Estimates
Room 812
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Wednesday, 18 September 2013

Dear Mr Smith,

With regards to the Budget Estimates hearing, held on Friday, 23 August 2013 on the Ageing and Disability Services portfolios, I enclose the following documents:

1. Answers to Supplementary Questions on Notice.
2. Answers to Questions taken on Notice during the hearing.
3. Corrections to Hansard for the hearing.

Should you require any further information, please contact Warren Hudson in my office, on (02) 9228 5263 or warren.hudson@minister.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely,



John Ajaka MLC

**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013-2014 - Transcript Questions
Ageing, Disability Services**

QUESTION 1 – Page 6

Mr LONGLEY: That is in total.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: What proportion of those were under 65? Could you provide that, please?

Mr LONGLEY: We will attempt to provide that information.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: That is the important point. There is real concern about what is happening— and maybe you can clarify this, or your officers: Is the department looking at servicing over-65s, because you know that they will be moving to the Commonwealth-funded projects and will then be the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, not the State Government?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Please be assured that that is not quite correct. My department will ensure that anyone moving to the NDIS will have all assistance from my department to ensure that their services are not reduced in any way but, in fact, are enhanced. The Commonwealth Government is working with the State Government to ensure that happens. In particular, Ageing, Disability and Home Care is working with Disability Care to make sure that the transition happens properly. We will still have a very large role in relation to this.

CHAIR: Is there anything that Mr Longley wants to add before we go to the crossbench?

Mr LONGLEY: Yes. In terms of the age splits, we do not have that information with us now. If we can take that as a question on notice we are certainly happy to look at that. It is worth emphasising that the number of clients has increased overall, but we will attempt to get that age split information for you.

ANSWER

During 2012/13, Home Care delivered services to a total of around 51,400 clients. Of the 51,400 clients there were 9,700 clients, under the age of 65, who received services funded under the Community Care Supports Program or other NSW funded services, accounting for around 19% of total clients.

QUESTION 2 – Page 8

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: Are you able to advise us on the number of units to be provided in the next financial year?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy to take that on notice.

ANSWER

The NSW Younger People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) Program is providing 121 supported accommodation places in total. 95 people have moved out of, or been diverted from entry to residential aged care to date, with the remaining 26 people to move in the next financial year into community based accommodation.

QUESTION 3 – Page 8/9

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Minister, you have made comments this morning about the quota of 30 persons with disability living in assisted boarding houses. How does the maximum capacity of 30 avoid institutional practices, poor quality outcomes and increased risk of abuse and neglect, which are known to occur in the congregation of people with disability?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: You are asking in relation to the abuse aspect?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Yes. The number 30 seems to be a golden number. Why is the number not less, or does that take into account those risk factors happening? Do they increase?

CHAIR: The question requires a detailed answer—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I am happy for you to take it on notice.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy to take it on notice. I know there is a cap of 30.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is right.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Your concern is you believe that number is too high?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: There has been a concern noted to me that that number may influence the poor quality outcomes or increase risk. I am wondering how the department arrived at the number 30. Is 30 a safe number?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy to take that on notice. As I said earlier, the introduction of the new accommodation standards, in particular, require it to be a limit of 30. What was of concern was that it was much higher than 30 at one stage. At least we have reduced it. That is a good question and I will seek some information from the department on that.

ANSWER

The maximum resident limit of 30 was considered by the Inter-Departmental Committee that was appointed to guide the Boarding House Reform agenda. The matter of boarding house size was also raised during consultation on the draft regulation. The research referred to in the Report on responses to the draft Regulation and Regulatory Impact Statement has found that there is no specific number of residents that will ameliorate against a sense of institutionalisation.

The Boarding House Act and the Boarding House Regulation contain a range of measures aimed at transitioning assisted boarding houses away from large scale, dormitory style institutionalised settings to living environments which provide residents with greater independence and choice.

ADHC also provides case workers for residents of assisted boarding houses to ensure that their individual needs are met and funds individualised services to residents of assisted boarding houses to support their access to the community, their health care and for advocacy.

QUESTION 4 – Page 11

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is what I am asking you. On page 15 of the report of Stronger Together 2 there is a reference to \$57.5 million. I am asking you to give me a breakdown of how that amount is distributed.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I will ask Mr Longley to answer that.

Mr LONGLEY: That amount is over a number of years.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Five years.

Mr LONGLEY: Yes, over the five years, so that is important to bear in mind. I will ask Ms Taylor, who has particular responsibility for that element of the Stronger Together 2 program.

Ms TAYLOR: As Mr Longley pointed out, that is an allocation over a number of years. We can give you on notice a complete breakdown. We are actually working out some of the detail of how that program in the later years will be phased and what it will purchase to support the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: You can take the question on notice and give me the information. I am happy with that.

ANSWER

The first two years of research and data development funded under Stronger Together 2 include:

- enhancements to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers;
- updates to actuarial modelling on demand and supply for disability services in NSW;
- data linkage projects with NSW Health and the Department of Education and Communities; and
- the establishment of the Centre for Applied Disability Research under the auspice of National Disability Services.

Funding for the remaining three years of Stronger Together 2 is currently being reviewed to ensure that investment supports the transition to a National Disability Insurance Scheme in NSW.

QUESTION 5 - Page 13

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: I understand representations were made under the draft Act that there would be a regulation that children would not be allowed. Was there a reason why that did not happen?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am not aware of that. I am happy to take that on notice.

ANSWER

The Boarding House Act and Regulation does not exclude children and young people from living in a boarding house. Instead, the Act and Regulation include measures aimed at identifying and responding to children and young people seeking accommodation in a boarding house and by assisting them to find alternative accommodation.

This position is based on awareness that, in many cases, boarding houses are a last resort accommodation option. To exclude children and young people from living in a boarding house could render them homeless.

In addition to the provisions of the Boarding House Act and Regulation, s122 of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW), requires residential accommodation providers to immediately inform Community Services if they believe a resident is a child aged under 16 years who is living away from home.

QUESTION 6 – Page 13/14

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Why are the minimum standards for assisted boarding houses not the same as the new minimum standards under the State environmental planning policy for affordable rental housing?

Mr LONGLEY: The State environmental planning policy for affordable housing covers a broader range of housing types. Boarding houses, of course, are quite a specific type. They were the subject of very extensive consultations across the community, so it was a very active process. Those regulations have been formulated with them in mind. They would have been done bearing in mind the other requirements of government. If there are any particular differences that you want to highlight, I am happy to look at those further on notice.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: I will put them on notice.

ANSWER

The accommodation standards provided in the Boarding Houses Regulation are designed to both sustain an industry that houses people who often have no other accommodation options, and provide for residents' privacy, choice and comfort.

The standards come into full effect in 2018 for currently licensed assisted boarding houses, and ADHC is working with operators to see that the standards are met.

Any new boarding houses licensed under this legislation will need to comply to be licensed.

QUESTION 7 – Page 14

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: Minister, how much money has your Government spent on Living Life My Way seminars that were held to explain the benefits of individualised funding?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The New South Wales Government continues to demonstrate its commitment to increasing choice and control for people with disability through individualised funding arrangements. On 3 July 2013 the Government released the Living Life My Way framework, which will guide the expansion of opportunities for people to exercise choice and control over their supports as New South Wales transitions to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The framework reaffirms the commitment of New South Wales to increasing individualised funding arrangements for people with a disability and details how it will achieve that.

The commitment is reflecting the fact that New South Wales successfully negotiated with the Commonwealth Government to become the first State to agree to fully implement the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This State will contribute \$3.1 billion a year from 2018-19, along with the Commonwealth's investment of \$3.3 billion. Simple mathematics tells us that that is a total funding of \$6.4 billion. As the National Disability Insurance Scheme launched in the Hunter progresses, the Government will continue to implement a Stronger Together 2 reform, including self-directed supports, individualised funding arrangements et cetera.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: My question referred to the amount of money spent. Would you answer that part of the question?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy to take that on notice and provide the specific amount.

ANSWER

Since June 2011, over \$2.3 million has been expended.

QUESTION 8 – Page 15

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: Minister, as you would be aware, earlier this year the Legislative Council passed a motion calling on the Government to consider lowering the age to access the Seniors Card to 45 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Can you provide the Committee with an update on that?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Certainly. I take this opportunity to note all the hard work that is being done in this area by the Hon. Jan Barham. I am advised that the Office for Ageing is considering the idea. I am awaiting a report on that. I am happy to report back to you on that.

ANSWER

The NSW Ageing Strategy included a commitment to reviewing eligibility for the NSW Seniors Card in line with entitlement to aged care services for Aboriginal people. The NSW Government will await the outcome of the review before making any recommendations to change Seniors Card eligibility.

QUESTION 9 – Page 17

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: And that is why you are a Minister for caring. Responses to the abuse of older people in New South Wales will be overseen by a government committee. Can you inform members what stage the committee is at?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy to take that question on notice and come back to you. In fact, I am waiting for a report on that myself.

ANSWER

The NSW Steering Committee – Prevention of Elder Abuse was established in February 2013 to oversee a coordinated approach to understanding and responding to the abuse of older people in the community.

The Steering Committee is responsible for:

- Identifying future state-wide policy direction and decision making to effect an efficient and effective state-wide response mechanism to address abuse of older people
- Supporting key initiatives of the NSW Ageing Strategy to tackle abuse
- Providing expert advice in relation to complex issues
- Monitoring local and regional policies and programs (including information and resources) for consistency and relevance
- Collaborating with representatives from the Commonwealth Government and other jurisdictions to develop and promote a national response to address the abuse of older people
- Providing an Interagency-level advisory role and response to current trends and events as required.

QUESTION 10 – Page 17

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Are any other initiatives on elder abuse underway at the moment? We just heard about the hotline. What other initiatives does the Government have to deal with this issue?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Again, that is part of the report and briefing that I am yet to obtain. I am informed that the next step, in addition to the hotline, is to increase community awareness. I am pushing that because, as the Hon. Jan Barham has said, it is not sufficient just to have the hotline; we need to get the message out to the community that they need to be actively involved. The department is developing and distributing resources to public and front-line services. It is enhancing technology infrastructure, including access through websites and social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and it is enhancing data collection to identify trends and unmet needs to inform policy decision-making. The steering committee also has responsibility for overseeing the New South Wales policy on elder abuse. It is developing protocols for responsible agencies to respond to elder abuse and identifying future statewide policy direction. From my perspective, it is not sufficient to simply be notified. Being notified at the right time and as promptly as possible is imperative.

ANSWER:

See answer to transcript Question without notice 9.

QUESTION 11 – Page 18

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: You note that the Ageing Strategy refers to active ageing. Can you inform the Committee on what sorts of practices or strategies you have to ensure that active ageing continues and what sort of budget has been allocated to that, given that prevention is better than cure?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Yes, I am happy to do that. I read some information earlier but I will try to do it from recollection. One of the real concerns one has is that the increase in the number of people aged over 65 in the next 30 years is just extraordinary. As of 30 June 2010, there were 1.02 million people aged 65 and over living in New South Wales. There are 1.9 million people aged between 45 and 64 in New South Wales. The Community Participation, Life Choices and Active Ageing Programs has been created to achieve a number of goals. First, people with disabilities will receive support to participate in activities. Funding is individualised, with the focus being on outcomes. Also, a range of flexible life skills and employment initiatives are being created for those in the ageing bracket to blend day-to-day activities with employment.

I will take the other aspects of that question on notice and come back to you. However, a number of grants have been made and I will be happy to provide those on notice. The grants are: Active Living, \$90,000; Seniors Week, \$27,500; Linking Seniors to Information, \$474,000; My Life, My Decision, relating to legal instruments and the like, \$50,000; and Lifelong Learning Opportunities, \$95,000. I mentioned earlier Local Government and Communities, and the grant for that is \$687,000. Further grants are: Abuse of Older People, \$329,000; Grandparents Day 2013, which we debated in the Chamber, \$250,000; and for research projects, almost \$600,000. This Government takes these initiatives seriously.

ANSWER

There are four streams to promote active living which include technology, sport and recreation, creative ageing and Seniors Week.

The 2013/14 budget allocation for Living Active Lives (not including Seniors Week) is \$500,000. However, in recognition of the whole of community response to ageing outlined in the Ageing Strategy, considerable enhancement to programs is being provided and/or will be provided through establishment and facilitation of partnerships between NSW Government and the private sector.

QUESTION 12 – Page 19

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I would ask the Minister how many grants have been expanded, but I only have seconds remaining.

CHAIR: The Minister could take it on notice.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Mr Green, you can submit questions on notice. If you need any further information please feel free to send those questions on notice.

ANSWER

Questions relating to the Local Government Grants Scheme should be referred to the Minister for Local Government.