

Question - NDIS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH FUNDING

Ms DAWN WALKER: I want to start by asking a few questions specifically about home care and the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS]. First, did Family and Community Services [FACS] and Ageing, Disability and Home Care [ADHC] provide funding to community health centres to specifically assist with providing services for people with disability in the community?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Specifically on behalf of Home Care?

Ms DAWN WALKER: Yes.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I might refer that to my Secretary to answer in a little bit more detail in regards to the funding that you have spoken about.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I would need to check and respond on notice. We have seen the end of the Community Supports Program. There have been some people who were previously receiving very low levels of attendant care and support in their homes—possibly help with mowing the lawn or some cleaning—who are not participants in the NDIS. However, the Government has run a so-called Continuity of Support program for the last couple of years to identify people in that situation and try to provide alternative supports for them, existing programs, a review of the National Disability Insurance Agency's [NDIA's] decision not to allow them to participate in the scheme, or practical help to find other ways to give them the supports they need. In the most recent budget, NSW Health has created a Safe and Supported at Home program that will similarly provide some support to people who are formally receiving some kind of support but are not now participants in the NDIS.

Ms DAWN WALKER: Are you aware of any NDIS participants who are being turned away from community health services because they are now on the NDIS?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I would need to check for you, Ms Walker, and respond on notice. Not that I am aware of, but the agency could be.

QUESTION:

Did Family and Community Services [FACS] and Ageing, Disability and Home Care [ADHC] provide funding to community health centres to specifically assist with providing services for people with disability in the community?

Are you aware of any NDIS participants who are being turned away from community health services because they are now on the NDIS?

RESPONSE:

I am advised that prior to the introduction of the NDIS, NSW Health Local Health Districts received Department of Family and Community Services funding for the provision of disability services. Under the NDIS, participants have funding for disability services in their individual NDIS plan and can choose a registered NDIS provider to provide their services.

Question - PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN JAIL

Ms DAWN WALKER: It will be good to see in November what the figures are. Moving now to people with disability in jail, do you have any figures on how many people with disability are currently in jail waiting on NDIS eligibility?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: That is a really good question. I do not have those figures in front of me, but I did have the opportunity to meet with some people in Red Cross only a few weeks ago who are running a program at this time, primarily in the Hawkesbury area, in regard to people with disability in jails. One point they raised with me—and I have already commenced correspondence with my Federal counterpart—is that there is great difficulty in assessing people who are currently in jail for their eligibility for the NDIS. I make the particular point—and I raised this with the person from Red Cross—that they are primarily focused on those people with mental health issues. As we know, there are now 11,000 to 12,000 people who have become eligible because of their permanent diagnosed state of psychosocial disorder that will now be eligible for the NDIS and currently accessing and receiving support through the NDIS. The reason I am so focused on that is we know that there is a recurrent returning of people with mental illness into our jail system. If we can provide those specific supports on behalf of their mental health, if they are diagnosed in that way, I think we can drastically reduce the amount of people going to jail and we can improve their quality of life. Ultimately, if they do have that determined permanent state of psychosocial disorder, they will be eligible for the NDIS and that will change their life. It is a great question. There is more work to do. I have certainly taken that on myself to write to my Federal counterpart to see if we can improve assessing people in jails, particularly those with mental health issues.

QUESTION:

Do you have any figures on how many people with disability are currently in jail waiting on NDIS eligibility?

RESPONSE:

This is a matter for the Minister for Corrections.

Question - TRANSITIONAL ADVOCACY FUNDING

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: We have been advised that the New South Wales Government will continue to provide up to \$26 million in transitional advocacy funding supplements for the existing disability advocacies. Of course, that was welcomed. How much of this funding goes towards regional disability advocacy providers? Secondly, given Labor has made a pledge that basically this transitional advocacy funding supplement will be in perpetuity, has the Government reconsidered its position to match that outcome?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Unless the secretary has details in regard to the regions, I do not think we have.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I do not but we can get that breakdown for you.

QUESTION:

How much of this funding goes towards regional disability advocacy providers?

RESPONSE:

The NSW Government recognises the National Disability Insurance Scheme is a significant reform that ensures people with disability are at the centre of choosing their supports and services.

Given the significance of the reform, we are monitoring it closely to ensure vulnerable people in NSW receive the supports they need to live the best possible life. That is why the NSW Government has committed to provide additional funding of up to \$26 million for advocacy services until 2020 under the Transitional Advocacy Funding Supplement (TAFS).

QUESTION:

Given Labor has made a pledge that basically this transitional advocacy funding supplement will be in perpetuity, has the Government reconsidered its position to match that outcome?

RESPONSE:

The NSW Government recognises the National Disability Insurance Scheme is a significant reform that ensures people with disability are at the centre of choosing their supports and services.

Given the significance of the reform, we are monitoring it closely to ensure vulnerable people in NSW receive the supports they need to live the best possible life. That is why the NSW Government has committed to provide additional funding of up to \$26 million for advocacy services until 2020 under the Transitional Advocacy Funding Supplement (TAFS).

Question - AUTISM AND THE NDIS

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Currently autism is the biggest primary disability type for children in the NDIS.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: What is the eligibility criteria for autistic children to access the NDIS, given that the continuum is so broad in terms of autistic needs?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: It is a question that is above my pay grade. I am going to ask the secretary.

The CHAIR: You are the Minister.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: To that point, I am happy to take that on board but, in terms of a diagnosis of a person with any form of disability, I am not making that determination as a Minister and you would understand and appreciate the fact that I am not qualified to make that determination.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: While that is being sought, I will ask a second question about that. In my area there are people in the situation where they have had the care prior to the NDIS, but now that there are certain criteria that those kids need to meet certain providers with certain qualifications it takes those kids out of the area to meet those specialists. Are you aware of cases like that?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I have met with a body of people who represent not only their own children but people who have children with varying degrees of autism.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: These kids used to see someone local and now, because of the NDIS, they require a specific provider with a specific ability to service a specific client, and these kids now have to make their way out of a regional area to see an accredited provider. Are you concerned about that type of thing happening?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I am certainly concerned if there are people eligible for the NDIS who cannot access services in their local area. I would say at this point in time that it is a work in progress. We are seeing new providers come in almost on a weekly basis because of the amount of people. I suppose this was a focus of the emphasis of getting people into the NDIS as soon as we could because ultimately then you could get clear line of sight—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My concern is that the further you get from the epicentre of Sydney the more difficult that is, and the last thing you want to do is take these very vulnerable kids large distances for a provider because the local provider suddenly does not qualify through the NDIS. That is of great concern to me.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: And with the tyranny of distance there has always been issues in accessing services across our broad regional and rural areas. I take onboard the importance of being able to ensure those—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I am not talking about having a hospital on every corner—let me make that clear. I am talking about medical professionals that do exist in their community that somehow have been disqualified from doing the job they did prior to the NDIS.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I am not aware of that, but I am happy to take that onboard.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: If there is any specific example you would like to provide us outside this discussion, we would pursue it with the NDIA.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I will forward something to you.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: At a headline level the number of registered NDIS providers has risen in New South Wales from 4,300 a year ago to 8,485 this year.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My point, Mr Coutts-Trotter, is: What was it before that? Did every GP have that ability?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: The Commonwealth of course funded directly some services for children with autism. To your earlier question, Mr Green, the benefit of the NDIS is that you do not have to establish a diagnosis; it is a functional assessment. I am happy to get information from the NDIA about how they are doing that in relation to children on the autism spectrum. This will see a

doubling of the funding available for supports. The system we are replacing was a rationed system. The NDIS will massively increase the availability and choice available to parents and families, including in regional areas. If there are examples of previous providers who for some reason are not able to register as providers with the NDIA, we are more than happy to pick that up and pursue it with the agency

RESPONSE:

I am advised early intervention supports for children with disability are delivered through a range of different systems, depending on their age, their level of disability, and whether their impairment is permanent. Any child 0-6 years who has been identified as having development delay or a disability, including autism, can seek assistance via the National Disability Insurance Agency's Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) gateway.

Question - SERVICES FUNDED BY THE NDIS

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Are oxygen bottles covered by the NDIS?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I would need to take advice on that.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Thank you, Mr Coutts-Trotter. While you are doing that, can you provide a list of all NDIS-exempt services that were previously provided, such as oxygen bottles, that are no longer provided? You referred, for instance, to the safe and supported at home program. However, now that disability has been privatised in New South Wales, clearly some services are no longer covered by the NDIS. Serious concern has been expressed by community organisations about those services, including oxygen bottles. Can you clarify that by providing on notice a list of the services that are no longer covered by the NDIS?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Would it be helpful also to identify what options there are in our own service systems if that is the case? In other words, I could identify the other health programs that may be options.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: That would be very useful. Can you also include some dollar amounts?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I will see what I can do.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: That would be very valuable. I am also looking at things like funding for particular types of services, for example, medical cleaning services for people in group homes who need them. Minister, can you discuss how medical cleaners are now funded in New South Wales?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I cannot specifically. I imagine they are a component of the support provided to people with disability in group homes. I am happy to take that question on notice. If you have any specific instances of shortfalls in services or any documentation, or if you have had any representations, I would be happy to receive that information so that I can address those issues more directly.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Thank you for that response. Obviously individuals have particular needs, and services such as specialist cleaners were previously funded. You have indicated that you are prepared to take that question on notice. Please do so, but I would like to zero in on that issue.

RESPONSE:

The Council of Australian Governments agreed NDIS Applied Principles and Tables of Services (APTOS) provide high-level positions on responsibilities between the NDIS and mainstream service systems.

In particular, NSW is playing a key role leading work on clarifying regarding responsibilities across the health system and NDIS. A key component of this national work is ensuring service systems coordinate and collaborate on service delivery to individuals, to ensure there are no service gaps.

Question - FACS DISABILITY STAFF

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: When you say "we", who do you mean?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Family and Community Services.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: How many staff are engaged in that activity?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: That is a good question, and I am happy to take it on notice. As you know, there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of disability-specific staff in our agencies.

RESPONSE:

I am advised that information related to FACS staffing matters are made available in the FACS Annual Report.

Question - NURSES FUNDED UNDER NDIS

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Are any nurses funded under the NDIS?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: How many in New South Wales?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I am happy to get that figure. However, in response to the question of whether the NDIS funds medical models of support, clearly it does and it has.

RESPONSE:

I am advised that according to the Applied Principles and Tables of Services (APTOS), nursing care is considered reasonable and necessary under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, where the care is required due to the impact of a person's impairment or their functional capacity and integral to a person's ongoing care and support to live in the community and participate in education and employment.

Question - REPRESENTATIONS

PAGE 14

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, you wrote six letters on behalf of a Mr Garry Bugeja— whom you say you do not know—about him obtaining free water licences from the Government. How many letters of support have you written on behalf of Kym Flowers, a 34-year-old woman with cerebral palsy who has been stuck living in Sutherland Hospital for five months because she has nowhere else to go?

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PAGE 16

The CHAIR: Order! In respect of the details of those letters, have you written more than one letter?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I am happy to get that detail and provide it on notice, but I have certainly made representations on behalf of that person. I state for the record, Mr Chairman, which is important, in the six months that that particular person was under the care of the disability organisation, they spent all but three weeks in hospital because of their health conditions. I do not want to go into specific cases, but it is important to note that the organisation that was providing the support to that family had made dozens and dozens of personal contacts with the family. That individual was in hospital for all but three weeks and I understand that the organisation never received one cent of funding for the plan. It never sought to seek one cent of funding for the plan that was in place because of the time that was spent in hospital as opposed to being in residential care that they initially sought. It is important to make that comment for the public record.

RESPONSE:

I have written to the Commonwealth in relation to this individual.

Question - SUMMER HILL

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Minister, I note that residents of the Summer Hill centre, in the same way as Stockton families, are expressing the same concerns that we discussed and that is the issue about whether the same level of care that they have been receiving will continue to be provided. For example, Summer Hill residents have indicated, and I think we have already touched on this, that NDIS plans do not cover their day-to-day health needs. Is that correct?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: No, I do not believe that is correct. I am happy to get specific details on the care that you talk about, but what I can say in regard to the clinical services and the allied health care on behalf of the residents of Summer Hill is that that particular contract was awarded to the Benevolent Society last year and that carer has certainly been in place and has been appropriate. In regard to the ongoing care and support and daily services for those people in Summer Hill, that will now be provided by Achieve. In regard to the individual processes or healthcare supports that you speak about, I am happy to ask the secretary to give you a little bit more detail.

RESPONSE:

I am advised that information on what is and is not funded in NDIS participant plans is available on the NDIS website. I am also advised that the Council of Australian Governments agreed NDIS Applied Principles and Tables of Services (APTOS) and the NDIS Rules describe funding responsibilities of the NDIS and health system.

Question - EARLY CHILDHOOD NDIS PROVIDERS

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My point is how do parents find out about the support? A lot of parents would not be aware that they can get assistance for speech therapy, for example. One of my children had speech therapy, not through this system but I know as a parent it was about \$75 a week, which adds up over time. It lifts your child up to the bar of every other child in the class to have an even start at school. How do we advise these families about the support? Is that through the preschool? How do we tell them that there is assistance through the NDIS for speech therapy or physiotherapy?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I stress once again, it is if the child has been deemed eligible for the NDIS. So I suppose it comes back to an early determination of the degree of disability of the child.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is my point. Most of these kids would not be in that situation where they would be noted to be in the NDIS category but there is an initiative to help them in the area of speech therapy. That is what I am concerned about? How do we let the parents know that they actually qualify for this assistance?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: It is a very important question. I will ask the Secretary to respond.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: To your question about the funding, I am advised the National Disability Insurance Agency [NDIA] is proposing to invest about \$136 million over three years in targeted early intervention services for children. There is a range of early childhood early intervention providers in New South Wales. I am happy to provide you with details of those. NDIA Local Area Coordinators would know about these organisations and the services they offer. New South Wales has run three, soon-to-be four rounds of public information campaigns to try to make sure people know about how to approach the NIDA, where to go to get what supports.

RESPONSE:

I am advised contact details for each Early Childhood Early Intervention provider in NSW are available on the National Disability Insurance Scheme website at www.ndis.gov.au.

Minister Williams – Questions Taken on Notice – Multiculturalism

QUESTION:

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is great. In Fairfield there are about 10,000 people from the Assyrian community and Mayor Frank Carbone is deeply concerned about the resources to help those people assimilate. Will you comment on what the Government is doing to ensure that those people are getting every opportunity to thrive?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Mayor Carbone is a great advocate for his area and he is also a good friend. I have spent a large proportion of my time in the Fairfield area. I have met with many of those refugee families and their children. One of the proud visits that I paid last year was to Fairfield High School, with both the captains—the boy and girl captains of that particular school are both refugee children—to hear their wonderful stories. But to come back to the resources, there are significant supports in place. Professor Peter Shergold is our Coordinator General with regard to the refugee program on behalf of the primarily Syrian and Iraqi refugees who are going to that particular area. There are significant supports. I am happy to get you some more details on the funding that we provide.

RESPONSE:

I am advised that to further help the resettlement of refugees in NSW, from 2016/17 the NSW Government invested an additional \$146 million over four years in the areas of housing, health, education, community services, youth services and legal support. Some examples of additional services include:

- A new NSW Refugee Health Services' clinic in Fairfield was established. It employs an additional 10 FTE nurses for the Refugee Health Nurse Program (RHNP) and Early Childhood Nurse Program. The School RHNP has expanded to high schools in and around Fairfield and now includes Fairfield Intensive English Centre, Lurnea, Miller, Blacktown, Holroyd, Chester Hill, Cabramatta, Bankstown and Fairfield Primary School.
- The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) opened a new office in Fairfield in late 2016. The office has three teams of Counsellors/Project Officers, a Youth Worker, a Community Development Worker and a School Liaison Officer, supported by a combination of NSW Government and Commonwealth funding. More than 1,500 clients have been seen in the Fairfield office since it opened.
- Targeted resources were provided to schools to support the additional learning needs of recently arrived refugee students. Schools in the Fairfield Principals Network have received a large proportion of the additional \$93 million allocated to the NSW Department of Education to meet the core schooling costs and special educational needs of newly arrived students.

- **A \$1.83 million Refugee Youth Peer Mentoring program delivered by the Department of Family and Community Services was established to deliver youth mentoring in priority locations across south-western Sydney.**
- **Four new Community Hubs were established in the Fairfield LGA, adding to the five hubs already situated within 10km of the Fairfield CBD. Hubs work through schools to create a support network for migrant and refugee women and organise school readiness activities to prepare pre-school aged refugee children.**
- **Working out of their Bankstown office, the bilingual staff of Legal Aid NSW provide an outreach service to core multicultural communities. The legal service provides free legal advice and representation, public-interest casework, referral pathways for clients with complex needs and community legal education programs.**
- **A total of \$22 million was allocated in the NSW 2016-17 budget to deliver the Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP) in Western Sydney and the Illawarra.**

QUESTION:

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, my question was very simple: Did you condemn Fraser Anning?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I would have to go back and check.

RESPONSE:

The highly divisive and offensive comments made by Fraser Anning in the Federal Senate were rightly condemned by all major political parties in the Federal Parliament, which was the appropriate forum. I have also noted my support for social cohesion in Multicultural and social media.

These comments do not support social cohesion in this State. Just as the Opposition Leader's comments about 'white flight' occurring in our Western Sydney region are hurtful to our multicultural communities and social cohesion in NSW.

QUESTION:

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: That is not true, Minister. You wait until there is a political opportunity for you. There are high-profile individuals who are promoting division within the community and you are failing to condemn them. You say that you do not know whether you condemned Senator Fraser Anning. You do not even remember Lauren Southern coming. During her visit she required a police presence. Do you know if she used the user-pays system for that police presence?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I do not know.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Did you make any investigations?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: No, I do not remember the visit.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: My honourable colleague informs me that it cost \$60,000 to the New South Wales taxpayer and you did not think to—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: No, she paid it.

The CHAIR: Please! We just had a question presented and an answer given. That is the way this works.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I am happy to take the question on notice. I am unaware of that.

RESPONSE:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Police.

QUESTION:

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: How many research papers has Multicultural NSW commissioned in the past 12 months?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Were any research papers commissioned?

Mr HAWKEY: We work on specific initiatives so rather than research papers we work to activities related to social cohesion. For example, we issued a lot of work around our COMPACT program to create new programs.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: So no research papers have been commissioned in the last 12 months?

Mr HAWKEY: We have engaged external organisations to provide us with research. For example, we have the COMPACT program where we engage an organisation to give us a comprehensive evaluation program. That organisation provided us that research to enable us to ensure that the program could be measured effectively.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: So one research project?

Mr HAWKEY: That is just one that I mentioned, yes.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Would you like to take that on notice and tell me how many research papers you have commissioned?

Mr HAWKEY: Sure.

RESPONSE:

I am advised Multicultural NSW publishes an annual report that is tabled in Parliament on the state of community relations in NSW. The Community Relations Report, which is also available on the Multicultural NSW website, draws on a wide range of research and data sources in making its assessment of the state of community relations in NSW. The report includes an objective assessment of NSW agencies under the Multicultural Policies and Services Program (MPSP).

QUESTION:

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, how many activities other than events are undertaken by Multicultural NSW?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: If you were going to define that by the amount of support that we give to cultural festivals, the amount of support that we provide to the Harmony Dinner, to our multicultural media and marketing awards, it would run into the hundreds. I am happy to give you a very, very detailed appraisal, but I think that is publicly available anyway.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I think you misunderstood the question, Minister. My question was activities other than events.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Activities other than events?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: You seem a little bit confused.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: What type of activities?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Any kind of engagement on policy. Have you put forward any Cabinet minutes of multiculturalism that do not involve events?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I do not think so.

Mr HAWKEY: We have the COMPACT program, which is the community partnership program, working with other partners in government.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Well, that is true.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I am happy for you to take that one on notice.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Yes, we might take that one on notice

RESPONES:

The purpose of Multicultural NSW is to build and maintain a cohesive and harmonious society that enriches the lives of all the people of NSW. It is supported by the Multicultural NSW Advisory Board, constituted under the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000*, which advises both Multicultural NSW and the Minister for Multiculturalism.

The agency delivers a range of programs and services to support communities in NSW.

Multicultural NSW partners with government and non-government organisations improve participation and access to services, education, employment and community life.

Through its partnership and grants program, Multicultural NSW engage communities and provides financial support to community initiatives that promote social cohesion and community harmony.

Multicultural NSW Language Services guidelines, professional interpreters and translators play an essential role in ensuring that language is not a barrier to accessing information or services. Multicultural NSW offers interpreting and translation services in 104 languages and dialects.

In 2018 Multicultural NSW fostered a new partnership with Service NSW that has increased access and accessibility of translators and interpreters for the people of NSW. The NSW Government, for the first time, will launch telephone interpreting services in early 2019.

In addition, for the first time in NSW, Language Services Guidelines, a Best Practice Framework has been developed and issued to all departments and funded agencies outlining what is required to achieve best outcomes when engaging interpreter and translator services.

Through the Multicultural NSW's network of Regional Advisory Councils, the NSW Government continues to be vigilant in monitoring and addressing issues relating to social cohesion and community harmony across the State, as they arise

Recognising the rich cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity of NSW, Multicultural NSW also hosts a Religious Leaders Forum. The forum meets four times a year in different places of worship, symbolic of their openness to learning about each other, working together, and building connections.

Multicultural NSW is the lead agency for community resilience-based Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives in NSW. The \$9.2 million, four-year COMPACT (Community Partnership Action) Program supports an alliance of 34 partner organisations who are all committed to promoting Australia's peaceful and harmonious way of life. 20,000 young people have been engaged through the program.

Multicultural NSW coordinates NSW Government responsibility for refugee and humanitarian settlement matters through its support of the NSW Coordinator General for Refugee Resettlement, Professor Peter Shergold. This work focusses on linking government, and the non-government, community, education and corporate sectors to provide coordinated, well-designed services. This work is part of the NSW Government commitment of over \$146m across four years from 2016-17 to ensure the right services and supports are in place to assist new arrivals to settle.

QUESTION:

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, I am asking: Did any of your advisers provide you with advice that these people were coming to Australia; that as the Minister for Multiculturalism you should be aware of it, you should be aware of their views and condemning them? Did any of your advisers, did Multicultural NSW or anyone come to you, because clearly you are not opening the newspaper to see it?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I will take it on notice and check for you.

RESPONSE:

Multicultural NSW and my advisers provide information on a wide range of issues dealing with my portfolio.

QUESTION:

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: How does your department ensure that new immigrants to New South Wales have adequate information, training and tools to recognise slavery, trafficking and labour exploitation?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I am going to refer that. I thought you were going to ask me about general supports for migrants and refugees but you have gone into a specific area that I cannot answer. If we do not have it, I will take it on notice and get an answer for you.

Mr HAWKEY: We certainly work closely with the Commonwealth as all decisions about individual refugees are made at a Federal level and then through the refugee resettlement program and then Peter Shergold as our coordinator-general. But specifically around those areas we would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I cannot believe you are giving me that answer given the fact that it is a hotspot of issues. If anyone is going to be exploited they are going to be refugees and immigrants. Are you telling me that you do not know what your department is doing about that? You are trying to say the Feds have got it, so it is in their hands.

Mr HAWKEY: When the refugees have been settled into the areas we will then work closely with the programs that have been put in place by—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: But you do not know what those programs are.

Mr HAWKEY: We know that there is the \$22 million program for—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: No, you do not know what those programs are.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: We can advise you.

RESPONSE:

I am advised that the NSW Government has committed over \$146m across four years from 2016-17 to ensure the right services and supports are in place to assist new arrivals to settle.

This investment targets employment, health, education, legal support, community and youth services, and includes \$4 million to Legal Aid NSW to provide access to timely, relevant legal information and advice in people's own language.

Working out of their Bankstown office, bilingual staff at Legal Aid NSW provide an outreach service to core multicultural communities across NSW. The legal service provides free legal advice and representation, public-interest casework, referral pathways for clients with complex needs and community legal education programs.

Multicultural NSW also provides links to information about workplace rights and protections for new arrivals on its Settlement Portal, which can be accessed through the Multicultural NSW website.

If any further information is required, then it should be referred to the Premier.