



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2022-2023

Supplementary Questions

Portfolio Committee No. 5 – Regional NSW and Stronger Communities

MULTICULTURALISM, SENIORS

Hearing: 1 September 2022

Answers due by: 28 September 2022

Budget Estimates secretariat

Phone (02) 9230 3783

BudgetEstimates@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Multiculturalism, Seniors

Questions from the Hon. Mark Buttigieg MLC (*on behalf of the Opposition*)

Elder abuse

1. How much of the NSW Government Seniors budget is dedicated to the prevention of Elder Abuse?
 - (a) What actions does the Department of Communities and Justice carry out to prevent or educate about Elder Abuse?

Answer

I am advised:

In the 2019-20 NSW Budget, \$13.9 million over four years was announced to establish the Ageing and Disability Commission (ADC). The role of the ADC is to safeguard the rights of older people and adults with a disability living in their home and community. The commission has responsibility for investigating allegation of abuse, neglect and exploitation of seniors and adults with a disability in home or community settings. In addition to the approved \$13.9 million budget allocation, DCJ has provided additional funding (through the Strategy, Policy and Commissioning division) of \$3.5 million from 2019-20 to 2022-23 to support the ADC and their work to prevent or educate about elder abuse. In 2022/23 funding of \$30,000 will be provided to the ADC through the Seniors budget for a Retirement Village Engagement Project focussed on elder abuse.

The Ageing Well in NSW: Action Plan 2021–2022 outlines specific actions to prevent or educate about Elder Abuse.

2. Is a “whole of government” approach taken to elder abuse?
 - (a) If so, which departments are involved in the prevention of and dealing with Elder Abuse, and what is their role?
 - (b) Are there regular meetings between the departments to discuss elder abuse and relevant actions taken in this area?

Answer

I am advised:

Yes. The Preventing and responding to abuse of older people (Elder Abuse) NSW Interagency Policy is available on the Department of Communities and Justice website. It sets out the agencies involved and their roles.

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) convenes an Interdepartmental Committee comprised of government agencies and representatives from the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing to monitor implementation of the Ageing Strategy which includes elder abuse strategies.

The Ageing and Disability Commission has a range of governance groups to support their work in elder abuse.

3. The Elder Abuse in NSW Parliamentary Inquiry report was released in June 2016. How is the NSW Government measuring its outcomes following the recommendations made in that report?
 - (a) How is progress being reported to the public?
 - (b) What are the main focus areas currently being pursued in the NSW Government’s response to this report?

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Elder Abuse Inquiry Final Report 2020 is available on the Departments website. I also refer you to the Ageing Well in NSW: Action Plan 2021–2022.

4. How is the NSW Government raising awareness of abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people in the community?

(a) How is the NSW Government measuring the success of its awareness campaigns in relation to elder abuse?

Answer

I am advised:

I refer you to the Ageing Well in NSW: Action Plan 2021–2022.

Further, the Ageing and Disability Commission (ADC) was established in June 2019 to, among other objectives, raise community awareness to reduce and prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and adults with disability.

5. How has the NSW Government promoted the Ageing and Disability Helpline?

(a) How are seniors in regional, rural and remote areas specifically being educated about the Ageing and Disability Helpline?

(b) How are seniors from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities being educated about the Ageing and Disability Helpline?

i. How is the success of these awareness programs being measured?

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Ageing and Disability Commission (ADC) actively promotes the rights of older people and adults with disability to live safe from abuse in their family, home and community. This is undertaken in a range of ways, including communications, engagement and education activities that promote the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline.

The ADC currently supports 18 abuse prevention Collaboratives across NSW, most of which (10) are located in regional areas.

Providing culturally appropriate and informed communications and resources to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities about abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people is a strategic priority for the ADC. In 2021/22, the ADC developed a cultural engagement strategy informed by consultations with culturally diverse communities, resulting in actions to develop a range of culturally informed resources and

communications. This includes updated translated resources, and a guide for service providers and organisations to build their capacity to identify and respond to abuse, and promote the Helpline and ADC to CALD communities.

The ADC is also working collaboratively with stakeholders in the multicultural services sector, community and religious leaders, and Multicultural NSW to gain insight into connecting with CALD communities and to promote our services, including the Helpline.

The success of the ADC's communications and engagement programs is measured through the following metrics:

- number of impressions on ADC social media pages, including Facebook and Twitter
- requests for ADC resources
- requests for information sessions about the ADC
- number of Collaborative events
- number of calls, enquiries and reports to the Helpline.

6. Now that the NSW Steering Committee on the Prevention of Abuse of Older People has overseen the establishment of the Ageing and Disability Helpline, does it still meet?
- (a) If so, what is now its primary purpose?
- i. How often does it meet?
 - ii. What goals is it working towards in the 2022-2023 financial year?

Answer

I am advised:

The Steering Committee no longer meets following the establishment of the Ageing and Disability Helpline.

7. What has been the take up of the Ageing and Disability Commission's free online learning module on recognising and responding to elder abuse?
- (a) Are there plans to further expand this training beyond the two modules currently offered?

Answer

I am advised:

Between August 2021 and August 2022 inclusive, there were 7,994 page views of the training module, and the module was clicked to access the training on 5,673 occasions.

In 2021/22, the NSW Aging and Disability Commission (ADC) worked with NSW Police to design their first online training module to better respond to abuse of older people and adults with disability, which is available to all police officers. The ADC is currently developing a training framework to provide a suite of education and training options and materials, including options that build the capacity of services and organisations to train their own staff through a variety of mediums.

8. Is the Let's Talk Elder Mediation and Support Service currently funded?
- (a) If so, what is the timeframe for which it is funded?
 - i. What is its annual budget?
 - (b) If not, what was the basis upon which its funding was ended?
 - (c) Is there any program operating providing a similar service to the community?

Answer

I am advised:

Yes. It is funded to 30 June 2023. \$552,564 is provided through the Commonwealth Family Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses: NSW funding National Partnership Agreement.

The NSW Government provides peak funding to the Seniors Rights Service. They provide legal advice for people experiencing elder abuse. Legal Aid NSW have an Elder Abuse Service for people living on the Central Coast or in the Lower Hunter region, which provides wraparound services to older people experiencing or at risk of abuse. The NSW Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline provides free information, support and referrals about elder abuse, and about protecting the rights, dignity and independence of older people. The Elder Abuse NSW Interagency Policy also includes a list of services that can provide support for people experiencing abuse.

Aged Crime Prevention Officers (ACPOs)

9. What involvement will the Minister for Seniors have in the NSW Police review into the rollout of the Aged Crime Prevention Officers?
- (a) Has the Minister for Seniors had input into the scope of the review?

Answer

I am advised that this project is ongoing. ACPOs are members of statewide Crime Prevention Units. All officers attached to this unit are trained in the needs of all members of the community, regardless of the category of crime.

Further questions should be directed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Police, as the Minister responsible for Aged Crime Prevention Officers.

10. Will the Minister advocate for the number of ACPOs to be increased to 56 as promised?
- (a) When will they be in place, as promised?

Answer

I have and will continue to advocate for the ongoing roll out of the Aged Crime Prevention Officers across NSW.

Further questions regarding Aged Crime Prevention Officers should be directed to the Minister for Police.

Local government rates

11. Is the rebate available for local government rates, water and sewerage charges in NSW being reviewed?
- (a) If so, when will the review be carried out?
 - (b) If not, does the NSW Government recognise the increased stress being put on seniors by the widening gap between the rebates and rates?

Answer

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Local Government.

Seniors Regional Travel Card

12. Are there plans to adjust the geographical eligibility criteria for the Seniors Regional Travel Card?

Answer

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

13. The Seniors Regional Travel Card program has been criticised for its boundaries which, in areas such as Lake Macquarie-Newcastle, mean that people on one side of the street are eligible while the other is not. What is the justification for the current boundaries of the program?

(a) Is there any scope for having them reviewed?

(b) Will the boundaries be reviewed during the trial?

Answer

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

Energy rebate

14. How is the Department of Communities and Justice working to improve the uptake of the Seniors Energy Rebate?

Answer

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government.

15. Does DCJ have a take up target for the Seniors Energy Rebate in 2022-2023?

- (a) If so, what it is?

Answer

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government.

Seniors rebates

16. There are 53 rebates available to seniors in NSW. Is there a list of rebates/savings measures on offer by the NSW Government that seniors can access in hard copy?
- (a) If so, where can it be accessed?
- i. How is it publicised?

Answer

I am advised:

Information on rebates is available on the Service NSW website or by making an appointment with a Savings Specialist at a Service NSW centre. Appointments can be made online, by phone, or by visiting a local service centre.

Further questions should be directed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government.

Housing

17. What support is available to seniors to help navigate the process of applying for social housing?
- (a) What additional support is available for people with limited literacy?
 - (b) What additional support is available for people with limited technology skills?

Answer

I am advised:

Applying for social housing can be completed online or by contacting the Housing Contact Centre (HCC) where all applicants can apply with assistance via the phone service, details can be found on the DCJ website: <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance>.

Questions regarding the application processes for social housing should be directed to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services.

Seniors Budget

18. How much is the total Seniors budget?

Answer

I am advised:

The Department of Communities and Justice Seniors budget is \$8.7 million for 2022/23. This, however, forms a part of the significant cross-government investment into programs and initiatives to support seniors.

19. How many people are directly employed in the Seniors team of the Department of Communities and Justice?

- (a) How many Full Time Equivalent positions?
- (b) What roles are included in the team?
- (c) How much of the staffing allocation is specifically tasked to event organisation?
- (d) How much of the Seniors Budget allocation goes towards event organisation and management?

Answer

I am advised:

I refer you to the 2021 Workforce Profile Report.

20. How many Full Time Equivalent positions were in the Seniors team in:

- (a) 2021/2022?
- (b) 2020/2021?
- (c) 2019/2020?

Answer

I am advised:

I refer you to the 2021 Workforce Profile Report.

21. What is the breakdown of the expenses covered by the \$95,000 budget of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing?
- (a) How many times a year does the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing meet?
 - (b) What is its main function in terms of guiding ageing policy?
 - (c) What particular aspects of ageing policy is the Council currently considering/responding to?

Answer

I am advised:

Information on the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing is available at

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/advisory-councils/maca>

Tech Savvy Seniors

22. How many seniors took part in the Tech Savvy Seniors program in the following years:
- (a) 2021-2022?
 - (b) 2020-2021?
 - (c) 2019-2020?

Answer

I am advised:

- (a) 2021-2022: Figures are not yet available.
 - (b) 2020-2021: 9,724 enrolments.
 - (c) 2019-2020: 9,168 enrolments.
23. A 2021 evaluation of the program by ACIG stated that, despite providing good access through multilingual trainers and resources, some people still experienced a barrier to participation due to dialect issues or the uneven geographical distribution of multilingual trainers. Has this issue been addressed?
- (a) If so, has there been a measurable impact on engagement with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities as a result?
 - (b) If not, what plans are in place to address this issue?

Answer

I am advised:

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is engaged with Multicultural NSW and the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW to try and address these concerns. DCJ is reviewing its funding model based on ACIG's report and a plan is being formulated to expand the access to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

24. The 2021 evaluation found the reach of the program into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohorts was “weak”. Have there been efforts made to include more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the program?
- (a) If so, what was the change made?
 - i. What was its impact?
 - (b) If not, what plans are in place to address this issue?

Answer

I am advised:

Yes, the NSW Government launched a pilot program called Tech Savvy Elders in Wollongong and Wagga Wagga to address digital inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Initial feedback is positive with over 125 people participating since the launch. The Government is expanding this pilot to more locations in 2022/23.

Sexual assault

25. Stakeholders within the seniors and sexual assault space have shared their concerns about sexual assaults, particularly on elderly women living in aged care. What steps is the NSW Government taking to address this area of concern?

Answer

I am advised:

This issue will be considered in the development and implementation of the NSW Government Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027, the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, and the first National Action Plan.

Information availability

26. According to the COTA 50+ Report 2022 older people report that it is getting harder for them to access information that is not on the internet. How is the NSW Government catering to people who are not literate or have limited access to smart phone and computer technology?

Answer

I refer you to the Ageing Well in NSW: Action Plan 2021–2022.

Retirement villages

27. In metropolitan areas, retirement village residents can access their retirement village exit entitlement within six months, and in all regional, rural and remote areas it can be as long as 12 months. Have concerns been raised about the fairness of this dual standard with the NSW Government?
- (a) Is there any plan to change the eligibility to the exit entitlement to a single timeframe across the state?

Answer

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Fair Trading.

Third-party contractors or consultancies

28. For every agency, department, or state-owned corporation within your portfolio, please provide the following:

- (a) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in communications services, including:
 - i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (b) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in PR services, including:
 - i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (c) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in marketing services, including:
 - i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (d) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in Government relations or lobbying services, including:
 - i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (e) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in industry or peak body membership, including:
 - i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,

- iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (f) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in policy or strategy development, including:
- i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (g) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in project management, including:
- i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (h) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in accounting and audit, including:
- i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (i) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in legal services, including:
- i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,
 - iv. Total cost paid
- (j) A list of all third-party contractor or consultancies engaged in any other services, including:
- i. Contractor name,
 - ii. Contractor ABN,
 - iii. Service provided,

iv. Total cost paid

Answer

I am advised:

Details of third-party contractors or consultancies are published in the annual reports of each agency.