

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Welfare Payment Infrastructure Transformation

Question reference number: QoN 1

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Why was tranche 1 six months behind schedule?

Answer:

The programme schedule was re-baselined in the December quarter of 2016 and the tranche extended from 31 December 2016 to end on 30 June 2017 to align with the funding for the Tranche One Digital Projects. Tranche One concluded on 30 June 2017 on schedule.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Welfare Payment Infrastructure Transformation

Question reference number: QoN 2

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

What would be the impact over the full seven tranches, which were initially telegraphed to be completed by 2022?

Answer:

WPIT is being delivered according to schedule. It will improve the way welfare payments are made to over 7 million Australians each year.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Telephony review

Question reference number: QoN 5

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Which indicators does the review recommend be discontinued? (p. 5)

Answer:

The Department of Human Services' Telephony Review did not recommend discontinuing any indicators.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: DHS Correspondence

Question reference number: QoN 6

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

How many sorts of letters get sent?

Answer:

There are a range of letters sent dependent on payment type and individual circumstances.

Types of letters may include:

- call to action/request for information;
- decision outcomes – grant letter, rejection letter, debt letter, suspension/cancellation letter;
- policy changes/eligibility;
- payment amount/circumstance changes;
- reminders/appointments; and

cards (e.g. Health Care Cards, Medicare etc.).

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: DHS correspondence

Question reference number: QoN 7

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

What initiatives are being put around that initial correspondence contact?

Answer:

The Department of Human Services' (the Department's) correspondence adheres to an established outbound correspondence governance framework governed by mandatory standards, operating principles and better practice guidelines, and is in place to ensure simplicity and consistency, plain English, and that legal obligations are met.

The Department also has a number of other key activities underway to improve the readability of the Department's correspondence, such as user testing, and the use of telephony analytics to identify if correspondence from the Department has prompted the call.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: DHS correspondence

Question reference number: QoN 8

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Please provide some metrics on what DHS hopes to achieve. Is there a percentage of calls that DHS thinks could be cut out through writing things in clearer English?

Answer:

The Department of Human Services does not have data to determine the percentage of calls that could be reduced solely as a result of improvements to correspondence.

The future implementation of speech analytics will enable the Department to better understand why people call us, including if the call is a result of correspondence received. This information will then be used to improve specific and future correspondence products.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: DHS correspondence

Question reference number: QoN 9

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Please provide an outline of:

- a) the process for drafting standard correspondence with respect to particular circumstances;
- b) the process used to assess/test the document for comprehension and/or readability;
- c) whether there is any independent input into the above two processes; and
- d) what processes exist to review complaints and/or further requests arising from particular correspondence.

Answer:

- a) The process for drafting correspondence with respect to a particular circumstance is as follows:
 - subject matter experts within a business area will draft correspondence relating to a specific circumstance;
 - the draft correspondence is reviewed by a specialist within the correspondence team to ensure it meets the mandatory standards and operating principles, and known behavioural and user testing insights are applied;
 - if the letter has a circulation volume over 300,000 user testing is conducted; and
 - insights and learnings specific to the user testing are applied.
- b) The Department uses the following to assess/test a document for comprehension and/or readability:
 - a specialist correspondence team is involved in the development of all correspondence, providing advice in line with the correspondence framework, the practical application of the Australian Government Style Manual, Human Services Writing Style Guide, plain English guidelines and preferred terms; and
 - correspondence products (over 300,000 circulation volume) are user tested by customers and the general public to determine the effectiveness of a correspondence product.

- c) User testing provides independent input (Australian citizens) to the drafting of correspondence, and the testing of comprehension or usability.
- d) Complaints about the Department's correspondence are received through a number of channels such as the Department's feedback services, Ombudsman and Ministerial enquires and staff feedback.

Complaints are documented, reviewed and responded to by the Department's specialist correspondence team, who liaise with business owners and ICT, where required.

Feedback from customer complaints is used to inform future development and regular updates of the Department's correspondence products.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Request to expand on responses

Question reference number: QoN 11

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

What indicators does the review recommend be adopted in the future? (p. 5)

Answer:

The review recommended broadening the focus to include new measures of:

1. customer effort; and
2. call resolution and quality whilst retaining the core measure of timeliness such as Average Speed of Answer.

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AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Request to expand on responses

Question reference number: QoN 12

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Is there any progress on the first-call resolution issue?

Answer:

The Department is introducing a post call survey to measure call resolution by asking the caller whether their issue has been resolved.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Request to expand on responses

Question reference number: QoN 13

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

What is the department's view, in light of the review, on publicly reporting a broader range of KPIs? (p. 6).

Answer:

The matter is for the Minister and Government, and is still under consideration.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Documents requested

Question reference number: QoN 15

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Can DHS please provide a schedule of the full phasings of the WPIT tranches? (p. 5).

Answer:

WPIT is being delivered according to schedule. Tranche One ran from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2017. The Programme is now in its second tranche, which began in January 2017 and will run for 18 months. The schedule for the remaining tranches is subject to government consideration.

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS No 452 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Documents requested

Question reference number: QoN 16

Member: Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 16 March 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Can DHS please provide a report back to the Committee on the new KPIs once they are finalised, including internal processes? (p. 10).

Answer:

Yes.