

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

ANAO AUDIT REPORT NO.40 (2013-14) TRIALS OF INTENSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Other reasons for closure of the trials

Question reference number: QoN 1

Member: Dr Andrew Southcott MP

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 November 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Were there other reasons for the early closure of the trials, apart from the department's need to meet its efficiency dividends? Did the department feel that the policy objectives of the trials had been achieved?

Answer:

The objectives of the trials were to test intensive service delivery models aimed at improving services by delivering more tailored and intensive support.

Over the three years following the announcement of the trials, the department tested and evaluated a number of strategies aimed at assisting customers with complex needs. During the course of the trials, the department found that the service delivery strategies tested did not lead to improved outcomes for customers when compared to customers not participating in the trials.

The department considered that the objectives of the trials to test service delivery models were achieved. Further continuation or expansion of the trials could therefore not be justified as this was not considered an efficient and effective use of resources.

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ANAO AUDIT REPORT NO.40 (2013-14) TRIALS OF INTENSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Advice prior to closure

Question reference number: QoN 2

Member: Dr Andrew Southcott MP

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 November 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

What advice did the department provide to the Minister regarding the use *of* funds, which had been appropriated for the trials, to meet the department's efficiency dividend? Did the department provide advice to or seek input from any other Ministers or departments whose portfolios would also be impacted by the early closure of the trials? If not, why not?

Answer:

Information provided to the Minister included findings of the trials. These findings were that the trials and service delivery strategies tested did not lead to improved outcomes for customers when compared to customers not participating in the trials.

The department considered that the objectives of the trials to test service delivery models were achieved and there was no further value for money in continuing the trials.

With regards to Case Coordination, these trials were conducted by the Department of Human Services to test service delivery strategies. As such, the closure of the trials did not impact on other departments.

With regards to Local Connections to Work trial, these were conducted in consultation with the Department of Employment and they were advised of the closure of the trial.

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ANAO AUDIT REPORT NO.40 (2013-14) TRIALS OF INTENSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Department of Finance guidance

Question reference number: QoN 3

Member: Dr Andrew Southcott MP

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 November 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

What Department of Finance guidance, instructions and / or other documentation did the department refer to when preparing advice for the Minister regarding this matter?

Answer:

The department considered various forms of guidance and advice from the Department of Finance (Finance) in relation to this decision. This includes advice regarding the use of departmental appropriations, the Budget Process Operational Rules, guidance in relation to the application of the efficiency dividend, and advice direct from Finance officials.

The department considers that the decision to cease the trials early was made in accordance with guidance from the Department of Finance, and is consistent with the Government's policy agenda to identify and realise efficiency improvements in departmental expenditure and to seek more efficient means of carrying out government business.

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ANAO AUDIT REPORT NO.40 (2013-14) TRIALS OF INTENSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Use of funds

Question reference number: QoN 4

Member: Dr Andrew Southcott MP

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 November 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Has the department used funds, appropriated for new programs or policy measures which subsequently did not achieve their policy objectives, to meet its efficiency dividends in the past? If so, please provide detailed examples.

Answer:

It is not feasible to identify each of the measures taken to meet all the efficiency dividends since the introduction of efficiency dividends in 1987-88.

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ANAO AUDIT REPORT NO.40 (2013-14) TRIALS OF INTENSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Use of funds

Question reference number: QoN 5

Member: Dr Andrew Southcott MP

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 November 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

The Department of Finance's policy document, *Report of the Review of the Measures of Agency Efficiency*, March 2011, states that:

The intended impact of the dividend is that the agency is required to manage its resources by improving financial and budgetary controls, improving management and administration processes, deciding on whether the uptake of new technologies is more cost effective, and negotiating and implementing improved (mutually beneficial) labour-management relationships (p.21).

Does the department believe that its use of funds, appropriated for the intensive service delivery trials, is consistent with the intended impact of the efficiency dividend?

Answer:

The department considers that the decision to cease the trials early was made in accordance with guidance from the Department of Finance, and is consistent with the Government's policy agenda to identify and realise efficiency improvements in departmental expenditure and to seek more efficient means of carrying out government business.

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ANAO AUDIT REPORT NO.40 (2013-14) TRIALS OF INTENSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: ANAO's description

Question reference number: QoN 6

Member: Dr Andrew Southcott MP

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 November 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

The ANAO describes the department's course of action as, 'unusual' and 'not consistent with the purpose of the new policy measure or the Efficiency Dividend' (p.17). Does the department agree with these comments?

Answer:

The department considers that the decision to cease the trials early was made in accordance with guidance from the Department of Finance, and is consistent with the Government's policy agenda to identify and realise efficiency improvements in departmental expenditure and to seek more efficient means of carrying out government business.