

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Public Hearing – 20 August 2020  
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

**Topic:** Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 - Question 13

**Question reference number:** SQ20-000568

**Senator:** Jordon Steele-John

**Type of Question:** Spoken. Hansard Page/s: 52

**Date set by the Committee for the return of answer:** 01 September 2020

**Question:**

Senator STEELE-JOHN: .....

I think that my next question would be for the minister. I'm trying to get a bit of clarity as to the current status of the Commonwealth role, or participation, within the Victorian government's Disability Rapid Response Group. Minister, are you able to clarify what exactly the Commonwealth's participation is in that group at this time?

Senator Ruston: Thank you, Senator Steele-John. Broadly, my understanding is that we, as the Commonwealth, were invited to join the rapid response team on 30 July this year. We attended our first meeting on 31 July. My understanding is that we have attended all subsequent meetings of the rapid response team. I believe that they meet sometimes twice a day, seven days a week. But I think that Deputy Secretary Rule has been very involved in the rapid response team, along with a number of people from the NDIA as well as the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, so I wonder whether Deputy Secretary Rule might have some more information. But that's my understanding, Senator Steele-John.

Ms Rule: That's correct, we have had officials from the National Disability Insurance Agency and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission attending every one of the Victorian government's Disability Rapid Response Group meetings since 31 July. Those people include a clinical adviser—a doctor from the National Disability Insurance Agency—the registrar from the regulator and senior officers from the NDIA. So we have clearly been in attendance at all of those meetings from the day after we were invited to attend.

Senator STEELE-JOHN: Does that mean that you formally accepted the invitation, or simply that you were present in the room?

Ms Rule: I'll have to go back—we would have been invited, I assume, via an Outlook calendar invite to those meetings and would have accepted it. I would have to take the process of the administration of how that invite was forwarded and received on notice. But I am certain that we have had officers in attendance at those meetings.

**Answer:**

On 28 July 2020, officials from the National Disability Insurance Agency and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission were invited to attend

Disability Rapid Response Group (DRRG) meetings. The invitation was received from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services. The Commonwealth has been a formal member of the DRRG since 29 July 2020.