

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Public Hearing – 28 July 2023

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Inquiry into the Annual Performance Statements 21-22

Question reference number: IQ23-000066

Question asked by: Julian Hill

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page:** -

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 23 August 2023

Question:

DSS's submission included a number of 'lessons' as a result from performance statement findings. Has DSS been working to improve its performance reporting processes related to these lessons and based on ANAO's findings?

Answer:

The department continues to work towards improving performance reporting processes, including remediating findings. This includes:

- developing internal resources and guides that support the department to meet its reporting obligations under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014,
- improving understanding across the department of reporting requirements, and
- addressing individual audit findings, particularly in relation to data assurance and controls, ensuring responses are proportionate and contextually appropriate.

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Inquiry into the Annual Performance Statements 2021 - 2022

Question reference number: IQ23-000067

Question asked by: Julian Hill

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Pages:** -

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 23 August 2023

Question:

In its submission to this inquiry DSS advised the Committee of some of its actions to strengthen data quality. Has DSS seen improvements in its data quality because of these changes?

Answer:

The department has taken a number of actions to strengthen data quality, including:

- establishing a Chief Data Officer role and a network of data stewards responsible for data quality,
- understanding the quality and completeness of third party data (reported to the department by other entities), and
- strengthening caveats and disclosures for transparency and meaningful interpretation of performance results.

Through these efforts the department has greater confidence in the accuracy and completeness of data reported for annual performance reporting. The department considers data quality has generally improved through the principles of accessing data directly from its source where possible (rather than relying on summarised results), understanding data limitations and supporting improved interpretation of results.