

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee
Inquiry into issues facing diaspora communities in Australia

QoN Number: 09

Subject: Grants funding model

Asked by: Committee members

Question:

1. The committee has heard from various groups that the grant funding model has shifted from funding being provided directly to community organisations to funding directed to commercial service providers or well established older community organisations. Is this an accurate categorisation of the current funding model? Can the department provide a breakdown of funding going directly to community organisations and funding going to commercial service providers?
2. It was put to the committee that current grants processes put smaller, vulnerable and emerging communities at a disadvantage compared to organisations with more resources available. How is a disparity of resources taken into the consideration of grants to ensure those with less resources are not inadvertently disadvantaged?
3. It was also put to the committee that there is a lack of focus on priority issues as well as small and vulnerable communities. How are priorities as well as small and vulnerable communities taken into consideration by the department as part of the grant and other processes?
4. How are new and emerging communities engaged with by the department?
5. How does the department make the grants processes as simple as possible, particularly for those where English is not their first language?
6. Is any governance training provided to assist community organisations meet grant requirement?

Answer:

1. Grant programs administered by the Department of Home Affairs vary in their aims and their funding models. The Department's multicultural and social cohesion grant programs directly fund community organisations. Settlement grant programs fund a wide range of organisations, including public companies, other incorporated entities and local government entities. Organisations also include not for profit, ethno specific, charitable and faith based organisations, and community organisations. The amount of funding to different organisations will vary annually in line with program funding, the funding model used and the demand for grants.

2. The Department's grant programs award grants in accordance with the relevant Grant Opportunity Guidelines for each program and the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines (CGRGs). Under the Grant Opportunity Guidelines eligibility criteria may be set that prioritises the type of organisations that can apply for grants. The Department of Social Services' Community Grants Hub, which administers the Department's grants application process on behalf of the Department, publishes advice to applicants to support the development and submission of their grant applications.
3. The relevant grant program Grant Opportunity Guidelines reflect the policy priorities as set by Government. These Guidelines may include eligibility criteria that prioritises the types of organisations that can apply for grants. For example, Round Two of the Department's Fostering Integration Grants gave priority to small not-for-profit organisations who directly represent a specific culturally diverse community in recognition that they are well placed to understand and support their community.
4. The Department of Home Affairs has a network of multicultural Community Liaison Officers who regularly engage with cultural and faith groups including new and emerging community representatives. The Department also has Settlement Network Officers who engage with refugee clients, service providers and groups such as employers, community organisations, schools, local councils, sporting organisations and volunteer groups. These engagements help identify priority issues and support the development of an evidence base on the effectiveness of programs and policy settings.
5. The Department of Social Services' Community Grants Hub administers the Department's grants application process on its behalf, as well as other government agencies. This ensures that red tape is reduced through faster, simpler and consistent processes. The Hub also provides information to support the development and submission of grant applications.
6. Yes. Specific support provided under the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support–Community Capacity Building program aims to empower new and emerging community groups and organisations to self-organise in order to support their communities. Activities include supporting the development of administrative and operational skills, including applying for and managing government funding.