



**The Hon Kevin Andrews MP  
Minister for Social Services**

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Dr Andrew Southcott MP  
Chair  
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit  
PO Box 6021  
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CANBERRA ACT 2600

**21 MAY 2014**

Dear Dr Southcott

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Andrews'.

Thank you for your letter of 12 February 2014 to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, regarding a Government response to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) Report No. 417. Due to Machinery of Government changes implemented in September 2013, the matter you raise now falls within my portfolio responsibilities as the Minister for Social Services.

The JCPAA Report made two recommendations – Recommendations 11 and 12 – relating to the Settlement Grants Programme (SGP) now administered by the Department of Social Services. The Government response to Recommendations 11 and 12 in JCPAA Report No. 417, signed by the Secretary of the Department, is attached.

Yours sincerely



**KEVIN ANDREWS MP**

Encl. *Executive Minute JCPAA Report No. 417 - Response*



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**

**EXECUTIVE MINUTE**

on

**JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT**

**REPORT NO. 417**

*Review of Auditor-General's Reports tabled between February 2009 and September 2009*

**General comments**

Following Machinery of Government changes, the Department of Social Services (DSS) only recently became aware of the need to respond in relation to Recommendations 11 and 12, following referral from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP). The Department has endeavoured to respond to the request as quickly as possible. The recommendations are administrative in nature and input from DIBP has been included.

**Response to the recommendations**

**Recommendation No. 11**

*The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) provides a brief report to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) detailing how DIAC is measuring the effectiveness of the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) under the new performance framework including:*

- *type of data collected;*
- *methodology used to collect data; and*
- *methods of consultation with local communities.*

In 2010, the former DIAC commissioned ARTD Consultants to evaluate the SGP. The final report was published in September 2011 and concluded that the SGP is assisting individuals to become increasingly self-reliant and able to participate in Australian society. The evaluation used multiple sources of evidence: settlement data, program data and reports, interviews and surveys. Ten sites were visited around Australia where focus groups and interviews with clients were held at each site and project case studies were prepared.

A performance framework has been developed and is used to monitor approved activities and encourage service and grant managers to focus on client outcomes. The annual settlement issues report, application form, work program and quarterly performance report all focus on the following settlement outcomes: social participation, economic well-being, personal well-being, independence, life satisfaction and being connected to the community. All approved activities undertaken within a work program are designed to lead to better settlement outcomes for clients.

Regular client evaluations and surveys conducted by SGP funded organisations provide feedback on the progress of clients towards settlement in Australia. Other surveys conducted by peak bodies, research bodies or the Department also provide feedback on the effectiveness of the SGP. For example, a study commissioned by DIAC and undertaken by Australian Survey Research Group Pty Ltd: *Settlement Outcomes of New Arrivals* published in April 2011, has assisted the Department in developing appropriate settlement outcomes.

**Recommendation No. 12**

*The Committee recommends that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) report within 12 months of tabling this report on the implementation and progress of the new Grants Management System (GMS) specifically addressing the issues raised in Australian National Audit Office Report No. 36 2008-09 with regard to the functionality of the GMS for the Settlement Grants Program (SGP).*

At the time JCPAA tabled Report No. 417, the former DIAC was responsible for administering the SGP. Following recent Machinery of Government changes, responsibility for settlement and multicultural affairs has moved to DSS from the former DIAC. DSS is working on a grants reform process to reduce red tape for service providers and reduce inefficiencies and duplication in grant programme management including enhancements to IT systems related to grants administration and reporting.



Serena Wilson  
Acting Secretary  
Department of Social Services

15 April 2014