

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 26 FEBRUARY 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Service Delivery

Question reference number: HS 51

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 April 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

I refer to the report: *How does the National Welfare Rights Network add value to clients?* prepared by Susan Bell, Research for the National Welfare Rights Network, dated December 2014 and released on 19 February 2015.

- a) What is the Department of Human Services (DHS) response to this report and its findings?
- b) Is DHS aware of any qualitative research of a similar nature which sheds light on how people negotiate the Centrelink system? If so, please provide a copy of the research?
- c) Does DHS see any value in the department commissioning a more extensive piece of research that could help improve service delivery outcomes and find better ways of meeting the needs and aspirations of those who use the department's services? If so, when will the department commission the work?

Answer:

- a) The department has not responded to the report, but it has a long-standing relationship with the National Welfare Rights Network (NWRN). Regular meetings are held twice-yearly and additionally as requested. The department values the input of the NWRN and the meetings provide an opportunity for the NWRN to raise and discuss service delivery matters.
- b) Yes:
 - *Mature-aged job seekers' experiences of Centrelink and the Job Network services in an Australian regional centre* - the Australian Council for Educational Research
 - *A Better Social Security System for People of Working Age* - Australian Council for Social Services
- c) The department is focussed on delivering the government's agenda of improving the delivery of payments and services, modernising service delivery, and reducing red tape. It continues to improve its services for all Australians through self-service options for customers in accordance with the e-Government and Digital Economy Policy. The department has no plans to commission research.