

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 2 JUNE 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: New Welfare Reform Trial Sites

Question reference number: HS 32

Senator: Siewert

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Question:

Senator SIEWERT: Over the number of initiatives, how many additional staff will you be putting into those 10 locations to deal with these initiatives?

Mr Sandison: I think we would have to take it on notice, because I would not want to bet that they will be in those locations, because they are responding to a range of issues. As you know, everything feeds through. If there is higher engagement there are different reviews, social workers, there might be appeals processes, and so everything is a distribution of resources. It could not be a statement that in each location there would be another 3.3 people just to look after teen parents. If there were that amount of staffing it would be distributed by the organisation in the different areas of effort needed by call centre staff. There would be an effort in call centre to respond to the calls from different groups that are engaged.

Senator SIEWERT: I appreciate what you are saying. What I want to know—

Mr Sandison: To the extent that we can as to what is in the local area, we can try to find that out for you.

Senator SIEWERT: If you could. I am interested to know how many people are going to be frontline people that will be assisting with the particular qualifications that are needed to deal with the sorts of barriers that we are talking about, because we are talking about significant barriers to disadvantage. I want to know about the qualifications, the quality of the people that you are going to be getting to actually make a difference if this is going to work.

Mr Sandison: To the level of detail that we have we can take that on notice.

Answer:

Approximately 115 staff will deliver these initiatives across the 10 locations in the 2011-12 financial year. These staff may, in part, be drawn from existing areas of the business depending upon workload across the department.

Departmental staff have a wide variety of experience and qualifications, including many with social work qualifications. In addition, the department will undertake a comprehensive program of staff training. Training will be delivered using a combination of traditional face-to-face and electronic self-paced learning approaches, and will be custom developed to enable staff to deliver each of the initiatives.