

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 4 JUNE 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: DHS Activities in Playford

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Senator: Edwards

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Question:

Senator McLucas: I share your concern. I was in Playford meeting with people recently. What you have just described is the reason why we have a program in 10 locations around the country. It is called Building Australia's Future Workforce and the elements of that our department is responsible for are the Better Futures Local Solutions Program. It operates in the Playford area.

I met with the local advisory group when I was there. They are working collaboratively and the chair was able to tell me that the collaboration that is now occurring through this investment is achieving results. I acknowledge, though, that the challenge is quite large, but there are a number of elements of that program that we would be happy to provide you that go to addressing vulnerability and really working with young people. I was able to present some certificates to young parents who have completed grade 12 or equivalent. They were all young women. They have been given another chance, another go, and in speaking with them they are feeling quite confident about their future.

It is the role of government and governments to work with communities that are going through a rough patch and that is what we are doing. We will provide you, either to the committee—I will take your advice—or to you directly, some information about what we are doing in the Playford region. We have a challenge and I think we are putting our shoulder to the wheel to try and work with the local community. The design of this program is very much around taking advice from local people about how we work with that community to achieve better outcomes, not only for young people but is very much focused on young people.

Senator EDWARDS: Obviously the employment rate drops dramatically after 22 years of age, but it is still 9.4 per cent, which is well above the national average. Minister, I would be very keen to see that. You mentioned that there have been some measurable advances?

Senator McLucas: I do not have that data, but what we can measure is the collaboration that we now have happening across the range of service providers, including our service providers. We play a big part through particularly our Centrelink services and our social workers, who are doing some fantastic stuff.

Senator EDWARDS: Anglicare are up there, obviously, delivering income management. Anything you can provide me with that suggests that these people are on track to hit their KPIs. They are relatively embryonic programs.

Answer:

As part of the *Building Australia's Future Workforce* package announced in the 2011-12 Budget, *Better Futures, Local Solutions* has been implemented and is mid-way through a 4 year trial in ten Local Government Areas across Australia.

In Playford, the four measures that make up *Better Futures, Local Solutions* are:

- New Community Positions and the Local Solutions Fund initiative;
- Income Management;
- Helping Young Parents; and
- Supporting Jobless Families.

The Department of Human Services is the lead for the New Community Positions and the Local Solutions Fund. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is the policy lead for the Helping Young Parents and Supporting Jobless Families initiative and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs is the policy lead for Income Management.

These measures are testing new ways to support vulnerable members of our communities.

New Community Positions and the Local Solutions Fund initiative

New community positions including a Government Action Leader, Community Action Leader and a Local Advisory Group have been introduced as part of a place-based approach in Playford, with a focus on harnessing local knowledge and support to improve and connect services within the community. The Department has seen an increase in cooperation across community stakeholders including not-for-profit organisations, businesses, training providers and government. Existing services are becoming more linked, and duplication of effort is being reduced. This supports the more effective use of funding and resources already available within the community so it can go further in improving outcomes in Playford.

In round one of the Local Solutions Fund \$180,000 (GST exclusive) was provided to Inclusive Directions to run the Employment Through Cooperation program to train young mothers in Certificate III Childcare. The Employment Through Cooperation project achieved its deliverables and intended outcomes for 2012.

The following three round two Local Solutions Fund projects were announced in May 2013 in Playford and are currently in their development phase.

- The Transitions program has been allocated \$415,364 (GST exclusive) to support the transition of students into training and employment. It will focus on individual strengths and interests to inform the support that is required to help each student.
- The Youth on the Move program has been offered funding of \$278,864 (GST exclusive) to provide pre-employment and life skills training to young people through local sporting and community clubs.
- The Enabling Change with Aboriginal Families project has been provided funding of \$294,016 (GST exclusive) for the Family by Family response, focusing on stabilising relationships within the family and the community of Playford. It will provide training to families who want to take on a coaching role to support other families in the region.

The Helping Young Parents measure

The Helping Young Parents measure has been operating since 1 January 2012. The Department of Human Services works closely with government service providers and community organisations in the Playford Local Government Area to link eligible young parents with services which will help them to:

- achieve Year 12 or an equivalent level of education;
- connect with parenting support programs; and
- connect their children with early childhood learning programs.

The Supporting Jobless Families measure

The Supporting Jobless Families measure has been operating in the Playford Local Government Area since 1 July 2012 and aims to link disadvantaged parents to locally available services that can provide support to:

- achieve better health and early development outcomes for their children;
- enhance school readiness and school transitions for their pre-school aged children; and
- assist parents to prepare for work.

Income Management

Income Management was introduced in Playford on 1 July 2012. The three measures of Income Management are:

- Voluntary Income Management;
- Vulnerable Welfare Payment Recipient Measure of Income Management; and
- Child Protection Income Management.

The numbers of people supported through these measures is increasing as people learn of the benefits arising from Income Management and referral mechanisms become established.

From 1 July 2013, automatic processes will be introduced to place-based locations, including Playford (South Australia), to ensure that vulnerable young people are assisted to manage their income support payments.

People who will be automatically placed on Income Management are:

- aged under 16 years receiving Special Benefit;
- aged 16 and over receiving the Unreasonable to Live at Home rate of payment; or
- under the age of 25 who receive a crisis payment due to prison release.

Engagement with local organisations and welfare groups to support people on Income Management is ongoing.