

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Social Services Portfolio
2014-15 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 5.1

Question No: 395

Topic: National Disability Advocacy Program

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Under Outcome 5: Disability and Carers, and in Programme 5.1 deliverables under Disability and Carer Support, the number of people with disability to be provided with direct advocacy support are estimated to increase steadily

(a) Will the National Disability Advocacy Program continue to be funded past expiry of the program in June 2015, and will disability advocacy continue to be provided by independent advocacy agencies?

(b) What was the process of selection for the advocacy agencies chosen to deliver the External Merit Review Support in NDIS trial sites? Why was it not advertised for all relevant agencies to apply?

Answer:

(a) The current agreements for the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) expire in June 2015. The Department of Social Services will work closely with current NDAP providers and state and territory governments, who also provide funding to disability advocacy agencies, to develop a way forward for the future of advocacy support.

Under the National Disability Advocacy Framework, signed by Disability Ministers in 2012, Commonwealth, state and territory governments have already committed to key principles to guide the provision of advocacy for people with disability, and promote greater consistency across government funded advocacy programmes. The Commonwealth is also committed to further reform of the disability advocacy system that complements current reforms such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and that is innovative, well administered, current, consistent, responsive and quality-assured.

(b) The Department of Social Services (DSS) undertook a direct selection process to identify the successful providers to deliver the External Merits Review Support Component.

The External Merits Review Support Component Program Guidelines provide significant detail about the approach and criteria used to select providers. These Guidelines are available on the DSS website at:

<http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/for-people-with-disability/part-c-application-information-for-the-external-merits-review-support-component>