

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 1 JUNE 2017 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Question reference number: HS 10 (SQ17-000091)

Senator: Roberts

Type of question: Hansard page 105

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 21 July 2017

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Senator ROBERTS: Some of the figures—I think they were in 2013; I think they stopped then—said that after five years 95 per cent of refugees were still on welfare payments. Are those figures still collected?

Ms Campbell: I do not know that we would have those figures. I think that is probably more a question for the Department of Social Services or the department of immigration.

Senator ROBERTS: The immigration department said to ask here.

Senator Ryan: If you put them on notice, they can be referred.

Ms Campbell: We can talk to DSS. I think sometimes people get confused between the Department of Social Services and Human Services, which is pretty easy.

Senator ROBERTS: Thank you. I am glad it is easy.

Ms Campbell: We can work with Social Services.

- b) Senator ROBERTS: What is the cost of providing these services? It is a small part of your department. Do you know the cost of these services?

Ms Campbell: I think we would probably have to take that one on notice.

- c) Senator ROBERTS: Is assimilation and integration of the new arrivals a key criteria that is considered when determining the effectiveness of the programs?

Ms Campbell: I think that is probably one for the Department of Social Services. We can take that on notice for them.

Answer:

- a) The Department is required to record residence to establish eligibility for Centrelink payments, but does not keep figures for the number of refugees who receive payments.
- b) The Department does not manage its operating budget on the basis of the individual circumstances of claimants or recipients. To determine the specific costs to deliver services to refugees would be an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

- c) The Department of Social Services has advised that the Government provides a settlement framework designed to help new migrants integrate into Australian life. The Department of Social Services' settlement programs include the specific objective of helping people to fully participate in the economic and social life of Australia. Further information about the settlement framework would need to be obtained from the Department of Social Services.