

## Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

### BUDGET ESTIMATES – 1 JUNE 2017 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Department of Human Services

**Topic:** Indigenous Language Interpreters

**Question reference number:** HS 6 (SQ17-000087)

**Senator:** McCarthy

**Type of question:** Hansard page 91

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

**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

Senator McCARTHY: Do you provide interpreters for Pitjantjatjara, Arrernte or Iwaidja for example?

Mr Jackson: We certainly provide interpreters. Equally, as the secretary mentioned, we also have a number of Indigenous service officers out in the communities, which certainly do assist with it as well.

a) Senator McCARTHY: And how many of those officers are there?

Mr Jackson: I can find that out very quickly.

Senator McCARTHY: This is Indigenous officers?

Mr Jackson: That is correct, yes.

Senator McCARTHY: If you could, that would be great.

Mr Jackson: I am sure someone will bring that to the table.

b) Senator McCARTHY: Could you also provide how many Aboriginal interpreter languages you use for the thousands and thousands of CDP participants?

Mr Jackson: Absolutely. We can provide that information.

#### **Answer:**

The Department provides interpreters for Pitjantjatjara, Arrernte, and Iwaidja languages.

a) As at 31 May 2017, the Department has 40 Indigenous service staff that are provided additional allowances to use their Indigenous language in servicing customers in specific geographical locations.

b) Indigenous languages provided by the Aboriginal Interpreting Service and the Kimberley Interpreting Service (contracted by the Department) include the following:

- Kimberly Kriol;
- Warlmajurri;
- Kukatj;
- Bardi;

- Miriwoong;
- Anindilyakwa;
- Alyawarr;
- Anmatyerr;
- Arrente (Eastern-Central);
- Arrente (Western);
- Kril (Top End);
- Luritja-Pintupi;
- Pitjantjatjara;
- Warlpiri; and
- Yonngu Matha (including Djambarrpuyngu).

The languages listed above cover approximately 80 per cent of Indigenous interpreting requests.

A very small pool of contracted Indigenous language interpreters are also used to assist Torres Strait Islander people. These languages include Torres Strait Creole (also known as Yumpla Tok, Meriam Mer, Kala Lagaw and Kala Kawaw Ya).

Departmental Indigenous Service Officers often also use their Indigenous language skills (where they exist and are appropriate to the area they are servicing) to communicate directly with Indigenous people in their primary language.