

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2013-14 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 1

Question No: 373

Topic: Families and children

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Moore asked:

1. Has any work been done on the development of the Government's commitment to implement a \$200 marriage voucher scheme?
2. What work has been done on the development of this policy?
3. Please provide any written material that outlines?
4. On the basis of what evidence is this policy being developed? Has any research been undertaken into the effectiveness of marriage vouchers?
5. Who will be eligible for these vouchers? How is eligibility determined?
6. How will the marriage vouchers be used?
7. Will there be a process of registration for 'marriage educators'? What will that process look like?
8. How will the government determine whether the service used is actually for the purpose for which the vouchers were given?

Answer:

- 1– 3 The Department is currently providing advice to the Government about implementation details of this policy.
- 4 Australian research consistently finds that marriage and relationship education assists committed, married, engaged or cohabiting couples to move through the phases of their relationship with improved relationship skills, strengthening relationships for up to five years. Research also indicated a lack of awareness of the benefits from marriage and relationship education.¹
- 5 – 8 The Department is currently providing advice to the Government about implementation details of this policy.

¹ W Kim Halford, Alf Lizzio, Keitha L Wilson & Stefano Occhipinti, "Does working at your marriage help? Couple relationship self-regulation and satisfaction in the first 4 years of marriage", *Journal of Family Psychology*, 2007, vol. 21, No 2, 185-194; Robyn Parker, "The effectiveness of marriage and relationship education", *Family Matters*, 2007, no. 77, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne; W Kim Halford, Howard J Markman & Scott Stanley, "Strengthening couples' relationships with education: Social policy and public health perspectives", *Journal of Family Psychology*, 2008, vol. 22, no. 3, 497-505; Robyn Parker, "Recent Progress in marriage and relationship education in Australia", *AFRC Briefing*, No 3, 2007; W Kim Halford & Michele Simons, "Couple relationship education in Australia", *Family Process*, vol. 44, No 2, 2005; Elizabeth van Acker, *The problem of marriage*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Donovan Research, *Pre-marriage education pilot project*, Department of Family and Community Services, 2001.