

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-17 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities

Question No: SQ16-000461

Topic: Cashless Welfare Card

Hansard page: Written

Senator Rachel Siewert asked:

- a) What baseline data did the Government collect to evaluate the Healthy Welfare Card trials in Ceduna and Kununurra?
- b) When will the reports on the trials of the Healthy Welfare Card be made public?
- c) What consultations took place before the trials began?
- d) How many people were consulted?
- e) How were consultations advertised?
- f) How are the evaluations distinguishing between the effect of additional support services being supplied in these communities and the effect of the Healthy Welfare Card?

Answer:

- a. Collection of baseline data is ongoing and includes:
 - Administrative data from the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Social Services (DSS);
 - Australian Government funded service provider data for financial and family support, mental health, alcohol and other drug services;
 - Data sourced from the South Australian and Western Australian Government, covering crime rates, child protection, school attendance, housing, and gaming machine revenue statistics;
 - State-based service provider data; and
 - De-identified data from Indue.
- b. The Minister for Human Services, the Hon Alan Tudge MP, released a six monthly report on the progress of the Cashless Debit Card trial. The formal evaluation of the trial will be completed in June 2017. The timing and release of the reports is a decision for the Minister.
- c. The Minister for Human Services, DSS and Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet consulted extensively with stakeholders from Ceduna in South Australia, and Kununurra in Western Australia prior to the trial commencing.

Those consulted included Aboriginal leaders, family violence service providers, family support services, education providers, health providers, rehabilitation service providers, police, local government, state government agencies, and the Department of Human Services local staff. The consultation format included one-on-one meetings, group roundtables and community information sessions.

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- d. Prior to implementation over 300 consultations had been held in the Ceduna region and 110 in Kununurra and Wyndham.
- e. Community information sessions were advertised in a variety of different ways, including posters within the community, flyers in Centrelink offices and service provider offices, local newspapers, council Facebook pages, through community leaders and local organisations.
- f. The evaluation methodology for the Cashless Debit Card trial has taken this issue into account and will draw on analysis of:
 - Quantitative survey data to examine differences between participants on the Cashless Debit Card trial who are aware of local support services and use local support services compared to those who are not aware of local support services or non-users of the local support services;
 - Quantitative data from a range of Australian Government and State administrative data sets, and service provider reporting on the usage of local support services;
 - Qualitative findings from surveys and in-depth interviews/focus groups and different intervals over the course of the Cashless Debit Card trial to identify mechanisms of effect which can account for observed impacts;
 - Analysis of data from appropriate comparison sites, which are similar to the trial sites in terms of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, to compare differences between the sites and any changes over time; and
 - Analysis of the different data sources using a range of research methods will help understand the potential impact and contribution of other factors on the Cashless Debit Card trial sites and the participants.