

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2008-09 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 7

DEEWR Question No. EW293_09

Senator Abetz asked on 17 June 2008 in writing.

Question

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- i.) How many people are currently being serviced by rehabilitation services?
- ii.) What is the average caseload size per provider, CRS excluded?
- iii.) What is the average duration of service?
- iv.) How many of these are people with disability?
- v.) How many of these were injured or had a health condition?
- vi.) How many commencements have there been to date in VRS?
- vii.) According to the Portfolio Supplementary Additional Estimates Statements (p 7) there has been a decrease in administered appropriations for Rehabilitation Services of \$3,635,000. Was this a result of the programme receiving fewer referrals than expected, or something else?
- viii.) If it was a result of fewer referrals, how many?
- ix.) How many referrals have been rejected as 'inappropriate' by the VRS provider?
- x.) What proportion of the total estimate in the PBS for VRS has been paid to CRS?
- xi.) What percentage of the total VRS business does CRS currently hold?
- xii.) Is the intention to increase the contestability for the next VRS tender?
- xiii.) Does the Department compare the service delivery provided to job seekers by CRS against those organisations who tendered for business share?
- xiv.) If so, what was the outcome?

Answer

- i.) As at 31 March 2008, there were 42,601 job seekers being serviced in VRS.
- ii.) On 31 March 2008, the average current caseload size per VRS provider, excluding CRS Australia, was 566 job seekers.
- iii.) On average job seekers are in the VRS program for 11 months.
- iv.) For a job seeker to be eligible to participate in VRS, they must have a disability that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of such impairments. As at 31 March 2008, job seekers who commenced in VRS in 2007-08 had the following primary disability: physical disability (67.8%), mental illness (22.9%) and other (9.3%).
- v.) See response to previous question.
- vi.) As at 31 March 2008, there were 29,860 commencements in the 2007-08 financial year.
- vii.) The reduction reflects the Department's estimate of remaining demand for VRS in the 2007-08 financial year.
- viii.) See response to previous question.
- ix.) VRS providers are unable to reject referrals, however, they can dispute a referral with a Job Capacity Assessment (JCA) provider or request a new JCA on the basis of additional information. If on review the JCA accepts that the referral was not appropriate the referral to VRS is cancelled and a referral to a more appropriate service made. Program data shows that as at 31 March 2008 this has occurred in approximately 1,200 cases this financial year.

- x.) The actual expenditure for VRS is not available until the Department's financial statements are finalised. However, CRS Australia has around 70% of the VRS business and is expected to receive a similar proportion of the final actual expenditure for 2007-08.
- xi.) CRS Australia has 80% of the fixed place business and 50% of the demand-driven business share as notified in the *Request for Tender for Vocational Rehabilitation Services 2007–2009*.
- xii.) No decision has been made about the contestability of VRS beyond the current contract period.
- xiii.) The Department does monitor the performance of organisations delivering VRS.
- xiv.) The partial contestability market has only been in operation since 1 July 2007. A Star Ratings model is being developed for VRS which will provide a relative performance measure between CRS Australia and other VRS providers. This work has not been completed.