

**Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Human Services Portfolio**

Additional Estimates 2006-2007, 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2007

**Question: HS82**

**Agency: Medicare Australia**

**Outcome 1, Output 1.1**

**Topic: Medicare Australia Branches**

**Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written Question on Notice**

**SENATOR MOORE** asked on 16/02/2007:

- (1) What financial provision has been made for possible extension of trading hours in Medicare branch offices in 2007 and 2008, including Sunday Trading?
- (2) Please provide budget estimates for 2006-07 and 2007-08 dedicated solely for the purpose to employ additional staff due to the extra responsibilities of implementing the Access card.
- (3) Is it envisaged that Medicare Australia Contact Centres will expand their services to cover Family Payments, other Centrelink administered allowances and pensions, or Access Card enquiries? If so what additional funding, staffing and hours of operation will be involved?
- (4) Please provide a complete list of government services and programmes which will be administered from Medicare branch offices in 2007 and in 2008 (separately please). If these services have increased since 2006, please provide the additional budget estimates used to cover these additional responsibilities.
- (5) Please provide a list of funding for each Medicare branch office listed by Federal electorate of operation for the years 2004, 2005, 2006, and projections for 2007 and 2008?
- (6) What is the staffing turnover for Medicare Australia contact centres by state for the years 2004, 2005, 2006?
- (7) How many, and at what classification levels, AWAs have been entered into, sorted by state, at Medicare for the years 2004, 2005 and 2006?
- (8) How many of these have removed conditions otherwise available under the collective agreement?
- (9) What is the percentage staff turnover in Medibank call centres, by state, for the years 2004, 2005 and 2006? What are the equivalent figures for Medicare branch offices?

**ANSWER:**

- (1) For the 2007-08 financial year, Medicare Australia has funding of \$8.456 million for extended trading hours already provided through the Medicare office network. No further major extensions are proposed.
- (2) The original budget for 2006/07 for Access Card was \$34.293m (Departmental) and \$11.461m (Capital). This has subsequently reduced to \$7.987m (Departmental) and \$8.367 (Capital). Staff costs are in the order of \$11.103m (including full oncosts) of the total budget.

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The original budget for 2007/08 was \$100.641m (Departmental) and \$1.250m (Capital). This budget was reduced to a current budget of \$11.511m (Departmental) and \$6.644m (Capital). The 2007/08 budget is to further develop and implement the infrastructure necessary to enable the delivery of the Access Card system and includes staff related costs in the order of \$10.484m (including full oncosts) of the total budget.

- (3) No decision has been made regarding as to whether there will be additional staffing for these purposes in contact centres.
- (4) The following government services and programmes are/will be administrated by Medicare branch offices in:
- (i) 2007
- Medicare claims processing, registration and enquiries
  - Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme safety net registration and cash claims processing
  - Australian Childhood Immunisation Register
  - Australian Organ Donor Register
  - Federal Government 30% Rebate
  - Family Assistance
  - LPG Vehicle scheme
  - Flexible service delivery of Centrelink seniors services in 4 Medicare offices provided by Centrelink customer service advisors.
- (ii) 2008
- As above.
- (iii) Services which are new or have increased since 2006 are:
- An expanded range of Family Assistance Services are now offered in Medicare offices. These services are funded under an agreement with Centrelink with the amount of funding received dependent upon the numbers of Family Assistance claims processed by Medicare Australia. Estimated funding for 2006-07 was \$11.7m
  - The 2006-07 Additional Estimates provided additional funding of \$3.8m over the forward estimates for Medicare Australia to assist the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources with administration of the LPG rebate scheme.
  - During 2006-07 Medicare Australia and Centrelink delivered Flexible Service Delivery arrangements within a limited number of Medicare and Centrelink Offices. Costs for this initiative were funded by each agency with Medicare Australia's costs being in the order of \$1.6M.
- (5) Attachment A provides direct costs of running Medicare offices including staffing, office requisitions and rent and outgoings. The budget for 2007/08 is not yet available.

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(6) The following table lists the percentage of staffing turnover for Medicare Australia contact centres (which include both call and processing functions) for 2004, 2005 and 2006:

<b>Year</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>Queensland</b>	<b>South Australia</b>	<b>Victoria</b>	<b>Western Australia</b>	<b>Tasmania</b>
2004	6.09	10.87	10.42	15.73	7.98	14.81
2005	10.96	31.38	16.3	5.78	10.29	16.66
2006	14.67	15.71	19.79	14.7	14.86	15.93

(7) The following numbers of AWAs were entered into in each of the years 2004, 2005 and 2006:

(a) 2004

<b>Level</b>	<b>National Office</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Tas</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
SES	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	9
EL2	27	3	2	0	0	1	1	34
EL1	7	4	0	0	1	0	1	13
APS6	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	5
APS5	0	2	6	0	1	7	0	16
APS4	0	0	3	0	2	5	0	10
APS3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	41	10	14	0	5	16	2	88

(b) 2005

<b>Level</b>	<b>National Office</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Tas</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
SES	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
EL2	30	2	5	0	1	0	0	38
EL1	8	3	0	2	1	0	0	14
APS6	2	3	2	1	0	3	0	11
APS5	0	2	4	0	1	9	0	16
APS4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
APS3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	58	10	11	3	3	13	0	98

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(c) 2006

<b>Level</b>	<b>National Office</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Tas</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
SES	21	0	0	0	0	2	0	23
EL2	56	4	4	0	0	0	2	66
EL1	22	9	2	1	0	1	2	37
APS6	3	1	3	0	0	2	0	9
APS5	3	1	3	0	0	4	0	11
APS4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
APS3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>146</b>

**Note:** Medical Officers and Legal Officers are included in the EL2 classification.

(8) Nil. Prior to November 2005, some employee conditions (ie private health insurance subsidy) were factored into individual AWA salaries to reduce administrative processing for these conditions. Thus, such employees still receive equivalent, though not identical, conditions to other employees whose employment conditions are provided for in the agency's collective agreement. With the exception of performance pay available under the AWA, all conditions now apply equally to non SES staff. Different remuneration and employment arrangements apply to members of the SES, so a comparative analysis of conditions for SES and non-SES employees cannot be made in this context.

(9) Please refer to table provided at Questions 6 for the percentage of staff turnover in Medicare Australia call centres (Medibank is not administered by Medicare Australia). The following table provides the percentage of staff turnover in Medicare Australia branch offices

<b>Year</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Tas</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>WA</b>
2004	10.43	7.8	10.39	9.38	6.58	4.99
2005	11.92	11.23	9.64	16.47	12.16	14.73
2006	11.32	21.7	7.59	15.26	8.36	15.58

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 9 hours at an estimated cost of \$515.