

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Additional Estimates 2006-2007, 13th and 16th February, 2007

Question: HS94

Department: Department of Human Services

Outcome 1, Output 1

Topic: Job Capacity Assessment – Matching Qualifications

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SENATOR WONG asked on 16/02/2007:

What efforts are made to match the disabilities of those referred for Job Capacity Assessments with specialised professional knowledge among the assessor (e.g. are mental health professional usually asked to assess those whose principal disability is a mental health disorder)?

ANSWER:

A Job Capacity Assessment is a functional assessment of a person's work capacity which takes into account the impact of a person's disability, health conditions, as well as other factors such as drug or alcohol abuse. The Job Capacity Assessment guidelines do not require the streaming of clients to assessors with a particular allied health qualification. Allied health professionals from disciplines such as social work, psychology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy undertake Job Capacity Assessments.

All Job Capacity Assessors are required to complete the mandatory training modules supplied by DHS on all aspects of assessments, which also include targeted modules on assessing the impact of mental health conditions on work capacity.

Whilst a client's disabilities are not required to be 'matched' to the particular qualifications of an assessor upon referral, an assessor can engage more specialised knowledge and skills to support their professional consideration of the functional impact of a client's medical condition/s if that is necessary. For example an assessor can:

- seek the contribution of another assessor to discuss the functional impact of a health condition. Job Capacity Assessment providers were selected on the basis that they had staff with a range of relevant skills and experience in conducting assessments; or
- purchase a specialist assessment from a Specialist (such as a neuropsychologist or cardiologist) where that is necessary to complete the Job Capacity Assessment.

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 3 hours at an estimated cost of \$190.