

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Health Insurance Commission

Department of Human Services

Budget Estimates 26 May 2005

**QUESTION NUMBER:** HS41  
**DATE ASKED:** 26/05/2005  
**DATE DUE TABLING:** 08/07/2005

**SENATOR LUDWIG** asked a follow-up to a question asked in December 2004:

1. Regarding the employees that your department or agency has identified as having:
  - (a) fluency;
  - (b) accredited translator;
  - (c) accredited interpreter;
2. Of these employees, please indicate what the department is doing in order to make full use of its employees skills in this regard and please provide a breakdown of this between employees whose accreditation was paid for by the department and those whose were not?

**Answer:**

1. The HIC has:
  - (a) 64 staff who are recognised as having sufficient fluency to be able to conduct regular conversations in a language other than English; and
  - (b) and (c) Six (6) staff who have been accredited to either translator or interpreter level.

2. Each of these staff are paid a fortnightly allowance in recognition of their skills.

Typically these staff will use their conversational language skills to assist customers who access our services and whose preference it is to speak in a language other than English.

Those staff that hold formal accreditation also use their skills to ensure HIC promotional and other material provided in a language other than English is correctly translated.

The HIC has not paid for the costs of accreditation for any staff.