

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

**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Human Services Portfolio**

**Department of Human Services**

Budget Estimates 2007-08 - May 2007

**Question: HS1**

**Outcome 1, Output 1**

**Topic: Department of Human Services – Questions on Notice**

**Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Hansard Page F&PA 56**

**SENATOR LUNDY asked on 24/05/2007:**

**Senator LUNDY**—Can you tell me when the questions were sent to the minister's office for approval?

**Ms Williams**—I do not have that information.

**Senator LUNDY**—Can you take that on notice...

**Senator Ellison**—The ones that were in time, I dare say, are not subject to the questions?

**Senator LUNDY**—No. That is correct.

**Senator Ellison**—Well, the ones after time we can take on notice.

**Senator LUNDY**—Thank you.

**Ms Williams**—It may be a bit more difficult than that because, as you would understand of the system, these things are often iterative: they go; the office does not think they are sufficient; we have to add some more information. So it is not as easy as that.

**Senator WONG**—Sorry, but I am going to express some frustration here. Although I am tired, I am going to try to be reasonable. At least you provided them this time. So, after a change of secretary and a change of minister, at least we have the answers, even if they have come in late. On the last occasion, from recollection—and I could be wrong, but this is my recollection—a significant proportion were not even provided. Notwithstanding the iterative process, which the previous secretary referred to somewhat frequently, I think Senator Lundy's question could be answered by giving the date on which they were first received by the minister's office.

**Senator Ellison**—We will take that on notice.

**Answer:**

12 responses were tabled prior to the deadline. Subsequently, six answers were submitted to the Minister's Office by the end of March with a further 33 answers submitted to the Minister's Office in the first week of April for consideration. The remaining answers were submitted to the Minister's Office as they became available. Reasons for these delays were:

- second Ministerial changeover;
- extensive data collection requirements;
- change of Secretary; and
- consultation with other Departments due to the nature of the contents of answers.

The progress of answers was communicated to the Committee Secretariat on a regular basis.