

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

## BUDGET ESTIMATES – 27 MAY 2010 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

### Human Services Portfolio

**Topic:** Staffing – Efficiency Dividend/Budget Cuts

**Question reference number:** HS38

**Senator:** BARNETT

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 9 July 2010

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

- a) Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts?
  - since the efficiency dividend was introduced?
  - since additional estimates?
- b) If so, where and at what level?
- c) Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details i.e.: reduction target, how this will be achieved, services/programs to be cut etc.
- d) If your Department/agency has been identified in the budget as delivering further efficiencies (savings), how will these be delivered? (for example, if the budget papers say ‘improvement to strategic work practices’ or similar, what are these and how will they be delivered?
- e) What changes are underway or planned for graduate recruitment, cadetships or similar programs? If reductions or increases are envisaged please explain including reasons, target numbers etc.

**Answer:**

**Department of Human Services (including Child Support and CRS Australia)**

- a) No.
- b) Not Applicable.
- c) Staffing levels are monitored and adjusted based on workload.
- d) Not applicable.

- e) The agencies within the Human Services portfolio are changing the way in which graduate recruitment and other similar programs are managed. This change is a move from individual agency recruitment processes to a single portfolio approach for the recruitment and placement of graduates, cadets and trainees across the agencies.

There are no plans underway for either a decrease or increase in graduate program placements within the portfolio.

### **Centrelink**

- a) Centrelink's funding and average staffing levels vary in accordance with work levels from new measures and changes to the activities undertaken by the agency.
- b) Not applicable.
- c) Centrelink's staffing levels are monitored and adjusted based on workload.
- d) Not applicable.
- e) The agencies within the Human Services portfolio are changing the way in which graduate recruitment and other similar programs are managed.

### **Medicare Australia**

- a) Medicare Australia's funding and average staffing levels vary in accordance with work levels from new measures and changes to the activities undertaken by the agency.
- b) Not Applicable.
- c) Staffing levels are monitored and adjusted based on workload. Any reduction in employee numbers will be as a result of natural attrition.
- d) Savings are identified in Budget Paper No 2 for Medicare Benefits Schedule - restructure of items to provide better primary care services. The Medicare Australia savings of \$8.6 million over the forward estimates period result from a reduction in forecast service volumes. These savings will be delivered by adjusting overall resourcing levels in the context of total activity levels for the agency.
- e) The agencies within the Human Services portfolio are changing the way in which graduate recruitment and other similar programs are managed. This change is a move from individual agency recruitment processes to a single portfolio approach for the recruitment and placement of graduates, cadets and trainees across the agencies.

There are no plans underway for either a decrease or increase in graduate program placements within the portfolio.