

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and agencies

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2005-2006, 1 November 2005

Question: HS59

Outcome 1, Output Group 1.1

Topic: Medicare Australia - HIC RE-BADGING

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR EVANS asked on 1/11/2005:

1. What is the cost of re-badging HIC as Medicare Australia?
2. Is there to be a government advertising campaign on the re-badging of the organisation? What will it cost?
3. Can you outline the non-health services that the MEDICARE AUSTRALIA is now carrying out for other agencies?
4. What is the reason for the MEDICARE AUSTRALIA taking on these roles?
5. Is there likely to be an expansion of these non-health services to be carried out by MEDICARE AUSTRALIA on behalf of other agencies?
6. Can you guarantee that there will be no loss of staff in other agencies because of these extra roles?

Answer:

- 1 The cost of the re-branding component of the transition of the Health Insurance Commission to Medicare Australia was \$0.7 million.
- 2 There is no advertising campaign proposed covering the re-badging of the Health Insurance Commission as Medicare Australia.
- 3 Medicare Australia has been a part of the Family Assistance Office (FAO) network since the inception of that concept. Initially Medicare Australia's role was to receive family assistance forms and forward them to Centrelink for processing. Medicare Australia is currently implementing the capability to fully process family assistance transactions in the Medicare office network.
- 4 Increasing Medicare Australia's role in the processing of family assistance transactions provides a more timely response to claimants of family assistance payments by resolving their application within the Medicare Office network, rather than forwarding it to Centrelink for processing. The increased capability also provides greater choice for family assistance applicants about where they access these services.

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- 5 Medicare Australia implemented the full Family Assistance Office (FAO) processing capability in five offices during 2004-05 as a pilot program. Drawing on the experience gained in that pilot, it is planned that the full FAO capability will be implemented in all Medicare offices by December 2006.
- 6 Medicare Australia is advised that there will be no decrease in Centrelink's staffing levels following the increased capability of Medicare Australia to process family assistance payments. Any capacity generated within Centrelink will be directed to addressing increased work volumes arising from other programs.