

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and Agencies

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2006-2007, 31 October, 2006

Question: HS43

Outcome 1, Output 1

Topic: Department of Human Services - Job Capacity Assessments

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR WONG asked on 31/10/2006:

- 1) Of those JCAs that have been finalised, how many identified a psychological/psychiatric condition for the person who was assessed?
- 2) What training do Job Capacity Assessors have in identifying symptoms of mental illness?

Answer:

- 1) Assessors do not diagnose medical or psychological/psychiatric conditions directly during a Job Capacity Assessment. Assessments are informed by a range of medical and other evidence provided by the client and their treating doctor and assessors use all available information to identify a client's barriers to participation, including those relating to psychological/psychiatric conditions. JCA reports can include details of up to ten medical conditions. It is not possible to identify the number of clients with only psychological/psychiatric conditions.
- 2) Assessors with allied health profession qualifications must meet all relevant State/Territory registration requirements and any other mandatory accreditation or competency-based standards applicable to their profession.

Assessor statistics indicate that currently more than 50% of Job Capacity Assessors are psychologists. DHS has incorporated a strong focus on mental health issues throughout the JCA Service Provider Guidelines (with relevant case examples).

Dr Geoff Waghorn from the University of Queensland was additionally contracted to develop JCA specific mental health case studies which focus on common mental health conditions and symptomatology. These case studies are mandatory training modules for assessors to enhance their awareness of specific mental health issues.

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 11 hours at an estimated cost of \$588.