

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 17-20 October 2011

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.1 Domestic Policy

Topic: Social Inclusion Unit and Board

Senator: Senator Fifield

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Type of Question: Written

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Question:

1. How much funding has been allocated to the Social Inclusion Unit over the forward estimates?
2. How many people are currently employed within the Social Inclusion Unit? Please provide a breakdown by APS level.
3. What was the expenditure of the Australian Social Inclusion Board in 2010-11 and 2011-12, and what is the budgeted expenditure over the forward estimates for the Board?
4. How many people are currently employed within the Australian Social Inclusion Board Secretariat? Please provide a breakdown by APS level.
5. What was the total cost of accommodation and meals for members of the Australian Social Inclusion Board for 2010-11 and 2011-12?
6. Can the Department provide a list of policies and programs that the Social Inclusion Unit has provided advice on?

Answer:

1. The Budget provided \$3.304 million in 2011-12 and ongoing for the Social Inclusion Unit (SIU).
2. There are currently 18.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in the SIU. Staff are at the SES Band 1, Executive Level 1 and 2 and APS Level 5 and 6. Classifications vary over time according to tasks.
3. The expenditure for Board related business for 2010-11 was \$155,664. The expenditure for the Board for the financial year 2011-12, processed prior to

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8 November 2011, is \$8,132. The Board's budget over the forward estimates is one component of the ongoing Social Inclusion Unit funding, which is set out at 1 above.

4. The Board Secretariat is staffed from within the Social Inclusion Unit. The numbers of staff working on secretariat tasks varies depending on requirements.
5. Accommodation, meals/catering and incidentals expenses for Board related business in 2010-2011 totalled \$13,240. Accommodation, meals/catering and incidentals expenses for Board related business for the financial year 2011-12, processed prior to 8 November 2011, totalled \$3,122.
6. The Social Inclusion Unit has provided advice to government and the Australian Social Inclusion Board on a broad range of policies and programs across the priority areas the government has set, including:
 - *Helping jobless families with children to increase work opportunities, improve parenting and build capacity* by helping parents into sustainable employment and giving children a good start in life.
 - *Improving the life chances of children at greatest risk of long term disadvantage* by providing health, education and family relationship services.
 - *Reducing the incidence of homelessness* by providing more housing and support services.
 - *Improving outcomes for people with disability or mental illness and their carers* by reducing discrimination, creating employment opportunities and building community support.
 - *Closing the gap for Indigenous Australians* with respect to life expectancy, child mortality, access to early childhood education, educational achievement and employment outcomes.
 - *Breaking the cycle of entrenched and multiple disadvantage in particular neighbourhoods and communities* by tailoring place-based approaches in partnership with the community.