



PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

2009-10 AND 2010-11 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES QUESTIONNAIRE — PART TWO

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Question 1

How effective was the Water Wise Program at reducing low income household water bills in 2009-10 and 2010-11?

Details of the outcomes of the Water Wise program can be found in the State Concessions and Hardship Programs Annual Report 2008-09 and 2009-10 at www.dhs.vic.gov.au. The last concessions report is from 2009-10, the relevant pages are attached.

Question 2

Please detail:

- (a) the cost of the Home Wise program in 2009-10 and 2010-11;

The cost of the Home Wise program was \$17.6 million in 2009-10 and \$7.1 million in 2010-11. Note that these are output costs only and exclusive of GST.

- (b) what measures were taken to reduce the incidence of ineligible applicants being provided with grants in 2009-10 and 2010-11; and

Program risks associated with ineligibility and fraud were addressed through the Home Wise program management strategy which engaged McGrathNicol Forensic to assess fraud risk within the Home Wise program. This assessment was conducted in accordance with Fraud and Corruption Control (AS8001-2008) standards issued by Standards Australia and was completed in October 2010. Action was taken by the Department to address all fraud risks identified in the review.

Eligibility for Home wise grants required the inspection by qualified tradesmen of the appliances of applicants to check that the appliance exists and/or is faulty, the electronic verification of applicants pension and benefit details to check that applicants hold a current concession card, and applicants to demonstrate that they lacked financial capacity (e.g. bank statement evidence).

- (c) the effectiveness of these measures.

Action taken provided effective measures to reduce fraud and ineligibility risks.

Question 3

The *Annual Report 2010-11* (p.17) indicates that the child protection staff retention rate improved in 2010-11. Please provide:

- (a) details of the retention rate over the last five financial years

The child protection staff retention rate has been over 80 per cent over the last five financial years and improved in 2010-11 to 86.8 per cent.

- (b) how many of the 101 workers recruited in 2009-10 (*Annual Report 2009-10*, p.17) are still employed by the Department.

The department does not monitor the recruitment of additional child protection practitioners associated with specific budget initiatives on an individual employee basis, but rather net growth in the aggregate workforce as a result of recruitment and departures.

Question 4

For Disability Services, what is the explanation for not meeting the 100 per cent target for the performance measure ‘Support plans prepared within 60 days of the person commencing to regularly access the disability services’ during 2009-10 and 2010-11?

In 2009-10 the actual outcome was 97 per cent for Individual Support and 96 per cent for Residential Accommodation Support (Budget Paper No.3).

In 2010-11 the actual outcome was 96 per cent for Individual Support and 93 per cent for Residential Accommodation Support (Department of Human Services Annual Report 2010-11).

The result for this indicator is less than 100 per cent for a range of reasons including the non-availability of the client and/or client supporters who would usually assist with development of support plans.

Question 5

In relation to a number of performance measures for the Homelessness Assistance output, the actual results for 2009-10 shown in the annual report are estimates only, as the actual data were not due until the end of 2010 (*Annual Report 2009-10*, p.33). Please provide actual data for 2009-10 for the following performance measures and explain any significant variations (greater than ± 10 per cent) between the estimate in the report and the actual result:

Performance measure	2009-10 actual result	Explanation for any significant variations between the actual and estimated result
Clients assisted with homelessness support	39,100	Actual result is within ± 10 per cent of the estimate in the report.
Households assisted with crisis/transitional housing accommodation (occasions of service)	12,500	Actual result is within ± 10 per cent of the estimate in the report.
Households assisted with housing establishment assistance during the year	36,000	Actual result is within ± 10 per cent of the estimate in the report.
Housing information or referral assistance (occasions of service)	80,000	Actual result is within ± 10 per cent of the estimate in the report.
Clients in urgent housing need as a share of all assisted/new households	100 per cent	Actual result is within ± 10 per cent of the estimate in the report.
Proportion of homelessness support episodes where an accommodation need was unable to be met	12 per cent	Actual result is within ± 10 per cent of the estimate in the report.

Question 6

In terms of the provision of crisis/transitional social housing to prevent and address homelessness (as discussed in the *Annual Report 2010-11*, p.53), please:

- (a) quantify the level of unmet demand in 2010-11 compared to 2009-10;

The measure *proportion of homelessness support episodes where an accommodation need was unable to be either provided or referred* provides a measure of unmet demand for accommodation assistance, for those clients provided with case management support. By this measure, in 2009-10, 12 per cent of homelessness support episodes were not able to be met. This is also the expected outcome for 2010-11.

- (b) detail what the outcomes are for households that fall into this category; and

Data for 2010-11 is not yet available.

- (c) detail what strategies are in place to address this need so that better results can be delivered in future.

The Victorian Homelessness Action Plan 2011-2015 has recently been published which aims to develop the evidence of the types of interventions and supports which can prevent people from becoming homeless and needing crisis accommodation responses and a range of reforms under the Integrated Family Violence Strategy, Creating Connections (Youth), National Partnership Agreement (Homelessness) continue to be implemented.

Question 7

What efficiency and service effectiveness gains were achieved by the Department in 2010-11 as a result of centralisation of IT services through the use of CenITex (please quantify gains where possible)?

Transition to CenITex for ICT Infrastructure service delivery occurred on a “business-as-usual (BAU)” service and cost basis on 1 July 2010 through a machinery of government change. CenITex has committed to maintaining current costs/prices for a minimum of 12 months for like services and to maintaining current service levels for BAU service delivery.

CenITex will progressively deliver a single desktop, one network, simplified sign-on, enterprise hosting and best practice service management via their Efficient Technology Services (ETS) platform.

The ETS program benefits realisation plan will deliver a cost/price decrease once ETS projects are implemented. Efficiency gains would be realised under this model.

Question 8

In terms of the programs that have been implemented to address family violence, how does the Department assess the effectiveness of these programs, and what results have been achieved compared to targets?

Since 2008 the whole of government response to family violence and its effectiveness has been the subject of research through an Australian Research Council grant with Melbourne and Monash universities in partnership with the government departments. The research investigates reform in the Victorian response to family violence with a focus on the integration of intervention responses. The

research project will conclude in 2012.

In addition some individual initiatives have been evaluated and shown to have positive outcomes for the women and children who have experienced family violence including accessing and maintaining safe and secure accommodation, linking in with community services and re-engaging in training and employment opportunities. There are also ongoing regional liaison meetings with funded agencies that the department uses to monitor service delivery in relation to targets.

The information below provides a summary of results achieved:

- Family Violence Support programs provide case managed family violence support to women and women and children experiencing family violence. Case managed support may be crisis, outreach and intensive case management and include programs such as private rental brokerage, assistance to stay safely in the home, and after hours support. In 2009-10 12,943 women and 10,119 children were supported to address issues of family violence. In 2010-2011 over 2,000 women were supported to remain in the family home, 266 Aboriginal women were assisted with outreach services and 800 women were assisted after hours.
- Women's and children's counselling and support services provide therapeutic services which may take the form of individual counselling or group work. These programs provide both short term and long term counselling to women and children who have or are still experiencing family violence. Services are delivered in accordance with 'Practice Guidelines: Women and children's family violence counselling and support programs'. In 2010-11 5,501 women and children received family violence counselling and support services.
- Men's behaviour change programs provide individual counselling and group work to men who use violence towards family members with the principal purpose of challenging men in their use of violence and to change their violent behaviour. Services are delivered in accordance with the No To Violence 'Minimum Standards of Practice'. In 2010-11 services were provided to 2,960 men.
- Regional intake services for men's behaviour change programs are designed to provide timely intervention for men who use violence towards family members and refer them to a men's behaviour change program for assessment, individual counselling, and group sessions. Services are delivered in accordance with the 'Service model and practice guide for enhanced access to men's behaviour change programs'. In 2010-2011 services were provided to 7,693 men.
- The Men's Referral Service (MRS) – After Hours Service responds to police referrals on weekends. In 2010-11 responses were provided in relation to 1,672. In addition, MRS reviewed approximately 3,000 referrals that required further information from external parties in order to be actioned by the service.

Question 9

What outcomes have been achieved by the Department's training programs for people living in public and social housing (*Annual Report 2009-10*, p.21; *Annual Report 2010-11*, p.39)?

During 2009–10 the Public Tenant Employment Program and the Neighbourhood Renewal program created more than 870 jobs and 1,600 training opportunities for public housing tenants and residents of disadvantaged areas.

During 2010–11 the Public Tenant Employment Program, Neighbourhood Renewal and the Housing Affordability Fund redevelopment projects created more than 800 jobs and 3,000 training opportunities for public housing tenants and residents of disadvantaged areas.

Question 10

In relation to the public housing waiting list as at 30 June 2011:

- (a) in comparison to the 2011 figure of 38,244 applications on the public housing waiting list.¹, how many applications were on the housing waiting list at 30 June 2008, 30 June 2009 and 30 June 2010;

30 June 2008	30 June 2009	30 June 2010
36,302	39,940	41,017

- (b) what was the average waiting time according to:
- (i) location (e.g. regions of the state);
 - (ii) type of accommodation (e.g. house or flat);
 - (iii) size (e.g. 3 bedroom or 2 bedroom)

There are many reasons why an applicant may wait for a public housing property. Factors such as the particular location and stock type preferences and bedroom size can affect waiting times. Further, the specific requirements of some applicants due to medical or other needs, which limit their ability to accept a property, can impact greatly on the ability of the Office of Housing to acquire a suitable property meeting all the necessary requirements.

Question 11

The *Annual Report 2009-10* (p.16) discloses that state-wide implementation of independent monitoring of disability services commenced in March 2010. Please provide a consolidated summary of the findings derived from the audits conducted in 2010-11, including:

- (a) what the findings were in terms of improving personal outcomes; and

As of 31 December 2011, approximately 60 % of service providers have booked or completed their certification. Of those who have completed their review against the standards, all have achieved certification. In achieving certification disability service providers are required to promote continuous quality improvement of services as well as positive and measurable outcomes for people with a disability, their family members and carers. They must provide an objective, evidence-base for systemic improvement and regulatory action to address nonconformity, and actively involve service users, their family members and carers. While analysis to determine changes in personal outcomes has commenced, further analysis will be required to confirm personal outcome impacts arising from certification and monitoring due to the timing of commencement of statewide monitoring and progress towards certification across the sector. Agency certification provides greater certainty and understanding in provider organisations to deliver quality outcomes for clients and as more agencies achieve certification and are reviewed against the quality framework the ensuing improvements in service systems and client inclusion are anticipated to lead to improved personal outcomes for clients, their families and carers.

¹ Department of Human Services, *Annual Report 2010-11*, September 2011, p.58

- (b) what initiatives have been implemented to obtain continual improvement in the delivery of services to people with disabilities.

The implementation of the independent monitoring process itself is a driver of continuous improvement at an organisational level. The focus through the implementation phase has been to strengthen understanding and efficiency of the system itself and implementation of specific global, service-focused improvement initiatives derived from independent monitoring would be premature at this stage.

The Standards of Disability Services in Victoria may also be regarded as describing the minimum requirements for compliance. In audit, the effectiveness of services provider systems and processes as a framework for delivering quality services in promoting client outcomes are evaluated. Performance against each standard is rated as either conforming or non-conforming. A rating of non-conformance will be accompanied by recommended actions to address the non-conformance and improve quality of services. However, even where conformance is recognised auditors will usually make observations and identify 'opportunities for improvement'.

Question 12

With regard to social housing and homelessness, under the umbrella of the *Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan – New Construction Stage 2* initiative, the 2009-10 Budget provided \$210.4 million in new output funding for 2010-11 and \$221.9 million in new asset funding for 2010-11 for the construction of around 4,300 new social housing dwellings.²

- (a) Of this funding, what was the Commonwealth component compared to the State contribution?

The Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan initiative was fully Commonwealth funded.

- (b) How many social housing dwellings were constructed in 2010-11 compared to the planned deliverables for that year from this funding?

There were 2,781 Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan funded social housing dwellings completed in 2010-11 against a planned target of 2,800 for that financial year.

- (c) If any of the anticipated deliverables for 2010-11 were not met in that year relating to this funding, please explain the factors that led to this outcome, the associated implications and the timeframe for when they will be achieved.

Persistent rain in the second half of 2010 followed by Victoria's wettest summer on record caused significant delays across the construction program and compromised Victoria's ability to meet the 2010-11 planned target. The delayed projects were delivered in the first quarter of 2011-12.

Question 13

The *Annual Report 2010-11* (p.193) indicates that the total base remuneration for executives decreased by only 2 per cent but the number of executives decreased by 29 per cent.

² Budget Paper No.3, *2009-10 Service Delivery*, May 2009, pp.315 and 320

- (a) How many individuals were included in the executive remuneration disclosure for both years?

2009/10 - 127 executives

2010/11 - 90 executives

- (b) How many of the executives included in 2009-10 were transferred to the Department of Health on 1 October 2009, and what income bands did their remuneration fall into?

41 executives as per Table 3 page 92 *Annual Report 2010-11*

Under \$90,000 as per 'Income Bands' definition in *Annual Report 2010-11* (page 193)

- (c) Please detail the number of executives who received increases in their remuneration between 1 July and 26 November 2010 and the number receiving increases between 27 November 2010 and 30 June 2011, breaking that information down according to what proportion of their salary the increase was.

Increase in base remuneration	Number of executives receiving increases in their base rate of remuneration of this amount between 1 July and 26 November 2010	Number of executives receiving increases in their base rate of remuneration of this amount between 27 November 2010 and 30 June 2011
0-3 per cent	72	0
3-5 per cent	0	0
5-10 per cent	4	2
10-15 per cent	0	0
greater than 15 per cent	0	0

- (d) Please detail the reasons for the increases in the total of executives' base remuneration between 2009-10 and 2010-11.

The reasons underlying increases included: a 3% Annual Executive Remuneration increase for 72 executives on 1 July 2010, 4 promotions and 2 remuneration reviews.

Question 14

The Department's *Annual Report 2010-11* (p.161) discloses that client/assistance payments to individuals amounted to \$482.5 million in 2009-10 and \$533.5 million in 2010-11. Please outline:

- (a) the nature of these payments;

These payments provide assistance to eligible concession cardholders to help meet the costs of energy, water, municipal rates and public transport fares.

- (b) the number of individuals that received such payments in 2009-10 and 2010-11;

Concessions were provided to approximately 810,000 households in 2009-10 and 815,000 households in 2010-11.

- (c) the ten largest recipients of the client/assistance payments and amounts paid to each recipient in 2009-10 and 2010-11;

Concessions are delivered to recipients through reductions in bills and fares paid by eligible concession cardholders. The concessions are delivered to eligible concession recipients by energy retailers, water corporations, municipal organisations and public transport providers. These organisations confirm concession eligibility. The identity details of individual concession recipients are not provided to the department by concession processors.

- (d) the accountability measures that are in place to monitor the use of these payments by the ten largest recipients; and

The Department of Human Services has agreements with concession providers regarding the provision of water, energy and rates concessions. The provision of public transport concessions is managed by the Department of Transport. The Department of Human Services conducts regular audits of concession providers to check that they are delivering concessions in accordance with program requirements. Departmental program managers and concession providers work closely together to address service issues and improve performance.

- (e) the extent to which the intended purpose was in fact met in 2009-10 and 2010-11 for the ten largest grants.

All eligible concession cardholders who applied for an energy, water, rates and transport concession received a reduction in their bill and/or fare during 2009-10 and 2010-11.

Question 15

With regard to the provision of statutory child protection services, the Department's annual reports (*Annual Report 2009-10*, p.27; *Annual Report 2010-11*, p.48) reveals that, against a target of 97 per cent, the actual percentage of child protection reports requiring an immediate response visited within two days amounted to 94.9 per cent in 2009-10 and 94.1 per cent in 2010-11. What are the implications of this shortfall?

Very high risk cases are always responded to as quickly as possible, however response may take longer for some of the cases categorised as most urgent within 2 days for a variety of reasons including: further information received may ameliorate the initial level of assessed risk; it may not be possible to visit within 2 days due to the child's whereabouts becoming unknown; or it may not be possible to visit within 2 days where it is not advisable to attempt to interview a child until a time and place can be found where the alleged perpetrator would not be present.

CONTACT DETAILS

Organisation:	Department of Human Services		
Contact Officer:	Ms Fiona Williams		
Position:	Director, Integrated Planning and Reporting		
Contact numbers:	Telephone:	90961093	
	Fax:	90969128.	
	E-mail:	fiona.williams@dhs.vic.gov.au	

The completed questionnaire must be returned by no later than COB, Tuesday, 13 December 2011.

Please return the response (including an electronic version) of the questionnaire to:

Valerie Cheong
Executive Officer
Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Level 3, 55 St Andrews Place
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Telephone: 03 8682 2867
Fax: 03 8682 2898
Email: paec@parliament.vic.gov.au

For inquiries on this questionnaire, please contact the Executive Officer or:

Christopher Gribbin
Senior Research Officer
03 8682 2865

Ian Claessen
Research Officer
03 8682 2861