

Question on Notice
Number. 494
Asked on Tuesday, 19 April 2005

MS LINDY NELSON-CARR asked the asked the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (MR PIT)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the Federal Government's indication that SAAP funding will only be increased in future in line with indexation, and with \$106m being withdrawn from the program over five years to fund innovative projects—

How will this impact on those who are dependent on SAAP on a day-to-day basis?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to providing high quality services to vulnerable people, including homeless young people and families, and people who need our assistance to get their lives back on track and to regain their independence.

The Commonwealth Government funding offer for the next five year SAAP Agreement seeks to remove \$5M a year from the Commonwealth's contribution to the funding base for SAAP in Queensland. Under the offer, the Queensland Government would be forced to commit an additional \$5M each year just to keep existing services operational.

The Commonwealth offer ignores the findings of the independently conducted National Evaluation, which recommended a significant injection of funding into the program to address unmet need for services and cost increases faced by funded agencies.

The Commonwealth proposes to use the money it is pulling back from the states and territories to invest in new Strategic Directions for SAAP. This will effectively mean pulling money out of the existing service system to fund more trials and pilots.

The Commonwealth Government has sought to disguise the withdrawal of its funding by claiming to have committed \$100M in additional funding over the course of the five year Agreement. However this \$100M is merely its indexation offer, which is part of every funding Agreement between Commonwealth and State Governments. These funds, which are regularly matched by the state, only allow the programs to run at their existing level, and keep up with inflation. They do not increase the funding available to services.

Unless the Commonwealth Government commits additional funding to the next SAAP Agreement, homeless people will continue to experience difficulty accessing homelessness services in Queensland. Homelessness service providers will continue to struggle to meet the increasingly complex needs of homeless people.