

Question on Notice

No. 706

Asked on Tuesday, 22 May 2007

MR LINGARD MP asked the Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services Queensland, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Seniors and Youth (**MR PITT**)—

With reference to the answer to Question on Notice No. 275 asked on 6 March 2007—

- (1) What programs does the State Government provide to assist the elderly in their own homes?
- (2) What security and accountability mechanisms have been implemented to ensure that Government employees involved with such programs do not abuse the trust placed in them to enter people's homes and deal with their personal affairs?

ANSWER:

My response to the Member for Beaudesert in relation to Question on Notice No. 275 recommended that as the responsibility for aged care facilities run by the government throughout Queensland lies within the portfolio of the Honourable Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Health, that he may wish to redirect his question accordingly. The response also provided information about a range of programs focussed on elder abuse prevention in Queensland, within the scope of the portfolio.

In relation to this Question on Notice No. 706, in so far as the scope of the portfolio lies, the most significant program funded by the state government to assist the elderly in their own homes is the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program.

(1) The HACC Program

The Home and Community Care (HACC) Program is a joint Commonwealth, state and territory government initiative which operates under the *Home and Community Care Act (1985)* and the *Home and Community Care Amending Agreement (1999)*. The primary purpose of the HACC Program is to purchase support and maintenance services to assist older, frail and younger people with moderate, severe or profound disabilities, and their carers. These services are designed to support HACC eligible clients to remain in their own homes for as long as possible and avoid premature and/or inappropriate admission to residential care.

The Queensland HACC Program is currently managed by Queensland Health and receives Commonwealth Government (64.64 percent) and Queensland Government (35.36 percent) funding. The Program subsidises the cost of a broad range of services across the state. These services, that include domestic assistance, social support and respite care and transport assistance are purchased through approximately 740 individual providers. These service providers range in size and complexity from those operating as part of a large organisation, such as Blue Care or Ozcare, to very small and often volunteer based providers, such as Meals on Wheels services.

(2) Security and Accountability Mechanisms

As part of their service agreement with the HACC Program, all HACC funded providers (both government and non-government organisations) are required to be independently assessed every three years against the Home and Community Care National Service Standards Instrument. There are seven National Service Standards including: Efficient and Effective Management; Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Personal Information; Complaints and Disputes. One component of the Efficient and Effective Management standard requires the service provider to ensure that the staff they employ are appropriately skilled/competent to carry out services for consumers.

In addition, the Service Agreement includes the requirements of providing HACC services in accordance with sound managerial principles and practices and complying with all applicable Commonwealth, state and local government laws and regulations.