

Question on Notice

No. 1424

Asked on Wednesday 7 October 2009

MRS MENKENS ASKED THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HOUSING AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (MS STRUTHERS)—

With reference to the \$2 million grant to Lifeline to provide financial counselling services—
Were any other worthy organisations providing financial counselling services considered for funding and if not, why and what processes were used?

ANSWER:

In view of the need to respond quickly to the needs of Queenslanders during deteriorating economic circumstances, an out-of-round funding process was approved and non-recurrent funding of \$3 million in 2008–09 and 2009–10 was allocated to Lifeline Community Care.

Lifeline Community Care is recognised as an industry specialist in financial counselling and receives funding from the Australian Government to deliver financial counselling services.

The organisation is an approved funding provider. The department has not funded a stand alone generalist financial counselling service previously. This out-of-round funding request was approved under the *Community Services Act 2007*. As Lifeline already receives Commonwealth funding, the department assessed that a pilot investment was an appropriate means of providing increased Generalist Financial Counselling.

Lifeline Community Care commenced the delivery of the Generalist Financial Counselling program on 1 January 2009. With this funding Lifeline has employed additional counsellors, conducted training, and established a 24 hour Financial First Aid counselling hotline. Since January 2009, Lifeline has counselled hundreds of individuals experiencing financial crisis.

The department does not provide dedicated funding for any other stand alone generalist financial counselling programs. However, further contributions are made through a range of targeted program areas including Gambling Help, Referral for Active Intervention and Emergency Relief funding. The department also administers financial hardship assistance payments to individuals and families following disasters.