

**Community Affairs
Legislation Committee**

Examination of Additional Estimates 2001-2002

Additional Information Received

VOLUME 5

**Centrelink, AIFS &
FaCS Output Groups: Cross outputs, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4,
2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4**

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
PORTFOLIO**

MAY 2002

Note: Where published reports, etc. have been provided in response to questions, they have not been included in the Additional Information volume in order to conserve resources. The title page of each report has been included in this document for reference purposes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATING TO THE EXAMINATION OF ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE FOR 2001-2002

Included in this volume are answers to written and oral questions taken on notice relating to the estimates hearing held on 21 February 2002

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 1

Topic: Australians Working Together

Hansard Page: Written Question on Notice

Senator Denman asked:

On page 57 of the Portfolio Additional Estimates statements, it says the Government will bring forward funding (\$19,702,000M) from 2002-03 to 2001-02 to enable Centrelink to undertake essential training, build IT transaction capacity, design service delivery and undertake area coordination earlier than previously anticipated.

- a) Could you please specify the areas that will receive the additional services?
- b) Why is there no allocation of funding for these beyond 2001-2002?

Answer:

- (a) The funding for:
 - (i) undertaking additional training will be used to fund adequate numbers of local Centrelink trainers to complete the necessary training, travel and accommodation requirements for the trainers to complete the training locally, and additional staffing in CSCs and Call Centres so that current work is maintained by backfilling for staff undertaking training where it is required.
 - (ii) building IT transaction capacity will be provided to National Support Office to coordinate the necessary infrastructure and requirements to be in place.
 - (iii) designing service delivery is allocated to National Support Office for costs associated with coordination of AWT implementation across Australia and project management and design of processes, documentation and workflows.
 - (iv) Area coordination is allocated to Centrelink's Area Offices in order to coordinate local planning and rollout strategies for implementation of AWT.
- (b) There are allocations for these beyond 2001-2002 and only some of the resources were brought forward to allow Centrelink to spread the requirements for effective preparation over a longer period.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 2

Topic: Dasfleet vehicles

Hansard Page: CA134

Senator West asked:

Has Centrelink received any petrol bills from lease expired cars?

Answer:

In the previous 12 months period (February 2001 to February 2002) Centrelink identified three (3) cases where Dasfleet invoiced for fuel on vehicles whose leases had expired, totalling \$7,348.49.

In two cases, the incorrect charge was identified before the accounts were paid and arrangements were made with Dasfleet to short pay the over-charge.

In the third case the invoiced amount was paid but when the overpayment was identified, a credit was sought by Centrelink and received from Dasfleet.

Centrelink has a standing policy of cutting fuel cards in half at the end of vehicle leases to protect against such invoicing errors. All offices will be reminded of the continued application of this policy.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 3

Topic: Open Privacy Investigation

Hansard Page: CA147

Senator Bishop asked:

When did the Director of Public Prosecutions seek additional information of an open Privacy Investigation?

Answer:

The information provided at the Estimates hearings needs correction, and clarification.

A privacy complaint was lodged by the constituent in June 1997. In September of 1997 the case was referred from Centrelink to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

In March 1998 the Director of Public Prosecutions advised that no further action would be taken by their office.

In January 2000 a case was lodged by the citizen with the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner which also sought financial recompense.

The citizen also concurrently wrote to Centrelink via a solicitor independently seeking financial recompense for the alleged breach of privacy. This action was subsequently suspended pending the outcome of the Privacy Commissioners Inquiry.

The matter is complex and is awaiting finalisation by the Privacy Commissioner and not the Department of Public Prosecutions as was indicated at the Senate Estimates Hearings.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 4

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard Page: CA 158/ 159/ 160/ 186

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) What is the aggregate number of calls in working days?
- b) Can you tell us how many families have called the centres over the last nine months on a month by month basis?
- c) Can you also provide statistics on the proportion of callers month by month, getting a busy signal, hanging up whilst on a queue and successfully getting through and average time on hold
- d) When did Centrelink conclude their preparations for handling FTB debt recovery inclusive of the waiver provision;
- e) Provide a daily breakdown of the numbers and types (via mail or telephone) of contacts with families between September and December 2001 in relation to FTB reconciliation.

Answer:

- a) Successful calls to the FAO by day from 14 January 2002

Date	Total	Date	Total
14/01/02	40,430	01/02/02	32,158
15/01/02	33,870	04/02/02	38,156
16/01/02	32,738	05/02/02	38,530
17/01/02	31,517	06/02/02	33,215
18/01/02	29,235	07/02/02	33,629
21/01/02	41,165	08/02/02	33,063
22/01/02	35,201	11/02/02	43,671
23/01/02	35,987	12/02/02	35,578
24/01/02	32,409	13/02/02	35,588
25/01/02	31,940	14/02/02	30,954
28/01/02	0 - Public Holiday	15/02/02	30,970
29/01/02	43,245	18/02/02	38,529
30/01/02	37,229	19/02/02	33,701
31/01/02	33,985	20/02/02	32,956
		21/02/02	33,080
		22/02/02	28,134
		25/02/02	39,526
		26/02/02	33,221
		27/02/02	32,431

Note:

- FTB calls cannot be identified separately from the general call traffic to the FAO
- Successful calls are those calls that were accepted into the Centrelink Interactive Voice Response Unit (IVR)

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b)

MONTH	SUCCESSFUL CALLS
MAY 01	624,015
JUN 01	690,617
JUL 01	837,857
AUG 01	716,241
SEP 01	586,901
OCT 01	670,791
NOV 01	639,883
DEC 01	568,962
JAN 02	757,356

NOTE:

- Information regarding individual number of families contacting the FAO is not available. Data available reflects the number of customer contacts in a given month.
- Successful calls are those calls that have been accepted into the Centrelink Interactive Voice Response Unit (IVR).

c) The following table displays the information requested:

Month	Callers receiving a busy signal as a percentage of total demand %	Abandon % (callers who hang up after reaching the IVR messaging)	Successful Calls as a percentage of total demand %	Average Speed of Answer (in seconds)
May 01	20	4.38	80	78
June 01	9	3.9	91	78
July 01	15	4.24	85	102
August 01	3	0.44	97	10
September 01	1	0.7	99	15
October 01	1	0.72	99	17
November 01	7	3.38	93	71
December 01	10	4.69	90	102
January 02	14	4.77	86	112

NOTE:

- FTB calls cannot be separated from FAO call traffic
- The difference between successful and answered calls includes customers who hang up rather than wait and those customers who have their call satisfied by recorded information within the Interactive Voice Response Unit (IVR).
- Successful calls includes those who abandon.
- Average speed of answer is the delay between leaving the IVR and having the call answered by a Customer Service Officer.

d) Preparations were concluded on or about 16 December 2001.

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- e) The requested data is only available at the aggregated weekly level. The data includes contact Centrelink made with Families between the periods September to December 2001 about their reconciliation results.

Week ending	Total
14/09/2001	315
21/09/2001	14,498
28/09/2001	13,358
5/10/2001	10,165
12/10/2001	10,319
19/10/2001	4,686
26/10/2001	4,314
2/11/2001	4,457
9/11/2001	5,426
16/11/2001	6,428
23/11/2001	9,493
30/11/2001	9,562
7/12/2001	8,765
14/12/2001	9,780
Total	111,251

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 5

Topic: Market testing of Family Tax Benefit reconciliation letters

Hansard Page: CA187 / 192

Senator Bishop asked:

- What date did Minister Anthony ask for market testing of the proposed FTB reconciliation (inclusive of the waiver) letters;
- What date did the market testing commence;
- When was the bulk of the work concluded;
- What was the date of the report – who did it go to and can we have a copy?

Answer:

- a) The Minister requested market testing of the reconciliation letters on 20 September 2001.
- b) Market testing commenced on 20 November 2001.
- c) The bulk of the market testing work was concluded by 23 November 2001.
- d) The final report was presented on 26 November 2001 and was distributed to selected staff within the Families Community Segment and Communication and Marketing Segment within Centrelink. A copy of the report is enclosed for your perusal.

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CENTRELINK

November 2001

Project number 2552

**EVALUATION OF FTB &
CCB OVERPAYMENT
LETTERS:
SUMMARY REPORT**

Centrelink

Evaluation of FAMILY TAX BENEFIT & CHILD CARE BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT
LETTERS

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Background and objectives

Both the Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit are provided through the Family Assistance Office. The Family Tax Benefit is provided to parents and carers of dependent children to help with the costs of raising children, and Child Care Benefit is provided to parents and carers of children to help with the costs of approved and registered childcare. Since 1 July 2000, Family Assistance Office customers who choose to receive their Family Tax Benefit fortnightly, and/or their Child Care Benefit as reduced fees must provide an estimate of their family's income to the Family Assistance Office.

At the end of the financial year, the Family Assistance Office compares this estimate with the family's actual adjusted income (provided by the Australian Taxation Office). If a recipient has overestimated their family's income, they will have received too little family assistance and will receive a top-up payment. If they have underestimated their income, they will have received too much family assistance and may be required to repay the excess.

To assist families in adjusting to the new measures, the Government has decided that, for the 2000-01 financial year only, families will not have to repay the first \$1000 of Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit overpayments related to incorrect estimates of income. The \$1000 tolerance applies separately to each of a family's Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit overpayments. After the waiver has been applied, the Family Assistance Office will recover any outstanding amount over \$49.99.

A process of contacting by telephone those recipients who have received more than their level of entitlement commenced in September of this year.

In May 2001, drafts of "family-friendly FAO overpayment" letters (designed to be sent to customers advising them of any debts) were market tested. At that time, the letters did not include information about the \$1,000 waiver or key messages about updating income estimates, as these were subsequently announced by the Government. Due to the sensitive nature of the information and the inclusion of additional details about the waiver, Centrelink required further market testing of these letters. Seven letters, each addressing different scenarios for overpayment (four of which relate to Child Care Benefit and three to the Family Tax Benefit), were tested.

2.1 Research objectives

The overall objective of this research was to evaluate the **content, readability and tone** of the letters, and to identify the **likely reactions of the target audience**, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness and acceptance of these materials.

The specific objectives of this research are as follows:

Content

Is there too much or too little information, or is there any missing information?

What messages do people believe the letters are attempting to convey?

Is the information provided in the letters viewed as positive or negative? Why?

Readability

What is the tone of the letters? Is it appropriate/user friendly?

Are they easy to read and understand?

Is the terminology used understood?

How well does the text flow?

Does the customer understand:

- what the \$1,000 waiver means?
- that the \$1,000 waiver is a transitional arrangement for the 2000/01 financial year only?
- that due to having an overpayment, their current year income estimate should be reviewed? (if they have not already done so)
- that if they do have a recoverable overpayment (ie. more than \$1,049.99), the amount needs to be paid back to the Family Assistance Office?
- the repayment options available?
- that they do not need to ring the Family Assistance Office if they accept overpayment and understand the recovery arrangements?
- that they can update their income estimate over the phone or on-line (ie. they don't have to update their estimate in person at an office)?

Likely Reactions

What, if any, actions are customers likely to take after reading the letters?

Do customers understand the consequences of not providing the Family Assistance Office with accurate ongoing information about their estimated income?

The research methodology used to meet these objectives is outlined in the following section.

Methodology

The research was qualitative in nature, involving four group discussions in two locations. The timeframe for the research was tight, being completed within one week. Details regarding the composition of the group discussions, and the conduct of the research are outlined in the sections below.

2.1 Group structure

Location

Two of the group discussions were held in Wollongong, and two were held in Parramatta.

Gender

The research included both male and female participants. In many households, males and females adopt different responsibilities with respect to organising and managing their children's childcare arrangements and with respect to taxation matters, including receipt of the Family Tax Benefit.

It was anticipated that females would be more likely than males to take responsibility for making and maintaining childcare arrangements. Accordingly, the sample included more female than male participants, with two of the groups containing a mix of males and females, and the remaining two groups containing solely females.

The following table illustrates this group structure.

Location	Gender
Wollongong	Females only
	Mixed gender
Parramatta	Mixed gender
	Females only

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Recipients of FTB and/or CCB

During the recruitment process, it was ensured that all participants were recipients of Family Tax Benefit and/or Child Care Benefit. During the group discussions, information was collected regarding which of these benefits participants received. A total of 21 participants indicated that they received Child Care Benefit, and 23 reported receiving Family Tax Benefit. Thirteen participants indicated that they received both of these benefits.

Age

Given the short timeframe for the research, only a limited number of variables could be taken into account in the recruitment of the group discussions. However, during the groups themselves, participants were asked to provide a few details about themselves, such as age and household income.

As shown in the following table, there was a slight skew towards younger parents, with the greatest proportion of participants being aged 25-34 years.

Age bracket	Number of research participants
25-34 years	20
35-44 years	10
45-54 years	1

Household income

As can be seen from the following table, participants were spread across a range of household income brackets.

Household income	Number of research participants
\$0 - \$29,000	8
\$30,000 - \$39,000	3
\$40,000 - \$49,000	3
\$50,000 - \$59,000	1
\$60,000 - \$69,000	6
\$70,000 +	7

2.2 Conduct of the qualitative research

A number of issues relating to the conduct of the group discussions are discussed below.

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Nature of attendance

Due to the nature of the letters, it was ensured that participants were informed at the outset of the group discussions that their attendance in no way reflected an increased likelihood of receiving such a letter in the future.

Notepads

When evaluating comprehension of information conveyed by communication materials, it is advantageous to minimise the discomfort of participants who may have trouble understanding the information or have little knowledge of the topic being covered. In order to get an accurate picture of how well participants understand any communication messages, it is also helpful to avoid the influence of other participants' understanding of the materials. To address these considerations, **personal notepads** were used during each group discussion. Before commencing the discussion, participants were asked to read through two of the letters and individually complete a brief notepad concerning the messages that were communicated. This assisted in evaluating the extent to which the participants **understood the information** contained in the letters, without participants feeling self-conscious or causing any embarrassment.

The notepads used in the group discussions are located at Appendix B, and the discussion guide used to moderate the groups can be found at Appendix A.

Presentation of letters

Seven letters were to be tested in the research. It was not possible to evaluate in depth all of these letters in each group discussion, as this would have created a confusing and artificial situation for participants. Furthermore, there were a number of similarities between the letters. For this reason, two of the letters were presented and discussed at length in each of the groups.

Family Tax Benefit letters were presented at the outset of two of the group discussions (one at each location), and Child Care Benefit letters were presented in the remaining two group discussions. Two of these letters were included in participants' individual notepads. Half the participants in each group were presented with one of the letters first in their notepad, and the other half were presented first with the other letter being tested in that group. In this way, the order of presentation of letters was rotated within and between groups, so as to minimise the impact of any ordering effects.

Research findings

A summary of the research findings is presented in this section.

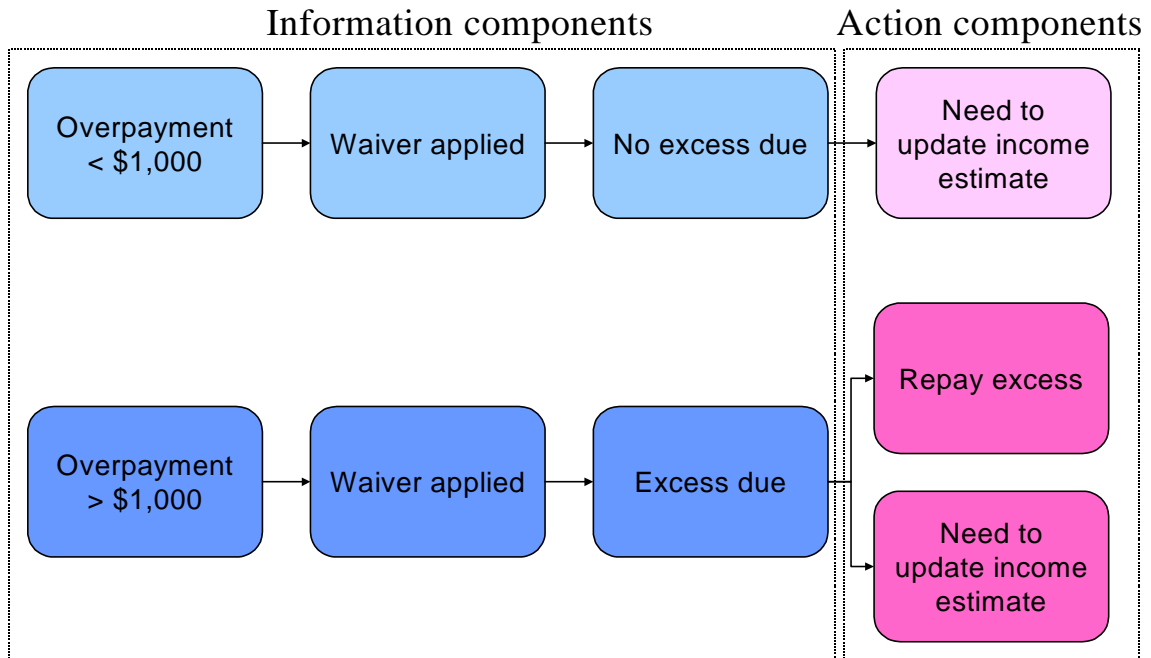
3.1 Messages

Although there are seven types of overpayment letters, there are two main scenarios depicted:

- 1) The recipient has received an overpayment of less than \$1,000. Once the waiver is applied, there is no excess due, and hence no repayment is required. Recipients are advised that they should update their income estimate to avoid being overpaid in the future.
- 2) The recipient has received an overpayment of more than \$1,000. Once the waiver is applied, there is an excess due. Recipients need to repay this excess using one of the payment options. Recipients are advised that they should update their income estimate to avoid being overpaid in the future.

Hence, the letters contain both information and action components. These concepts are illustrated in the following diagram.

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Findings related to four messages conveyed by the letters are outlined under the following headings.

Overpayment

The letters clearly communicate that the recipient has received more benefit than they are entitled to. Recipients also understand the explanation provided in the letters, specifically, that this overpayment has resulted from a disparity between their actual family income, and the income estimate that they provided to the Family Assistance Office.

In terms of their reactions to this information, there are three relevant findings:

Many participants expressed **difficulty in providing an accurate estimate of their family income**, given casual or contract work, and the simple fact that one cannot know the future. Some participants believed that providing an income estimate was an unreasonable expectation.

There was widespread **confusion regarding how benefits are calculated**, particularly with respect to Family Tax Benefit:

- There was a general understanding that one’s family income affects their level of entitlement, and that an ‘upper threshold’ applies to eligibility for Family Tax Benefit.

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- Most also understood that the number of children influences one's level of entitlement, yet most were unaware that age of the children also influences the amount of entitlement.

Many participants believed that it was possible that Centrelink had made some error, either in calculating the recipient's entitlement, or not recording changes that the recipient had reported that might affect their level of entitlement. This belief led many participants to say that they would like to check the basis for the calculations outlined in the letters.

Given the difficulties in providing an accurate income estimate, confusion regarding how entitlements are calculated, and a belief that Centrelink may make mistakes, many participants felt that avoiding an overpayment was largely out of their control. Nonetheless, many indicated that they currently report any changes to their family circumstances (including income estimates) to the Family Assistance Office.

Among a few participants, there was some resentment expressed regarding the timing of the letters. These participants highlighted the fact that, being December, nearly half of the financial year would have passed, and that it is likely that they would have been accumulating more debt over the last few months.

Waiver

The letters effectively communicate the concept of a waiver, and participants did not mistake the waiver for a payment.

There was limited awareness of the waiver prior to reading the letter. In general, the immediate reaction to the waiver was favourable, with many respondents expressing relief at the news. For some participants, however, the overpayment message overshadowed the waiver message. These participants were focussed on the issue of how an overpayment had arisen. It is likely that this response will be common among those recipients who have been overpaid by more than \$1,000.

Participants understood that the waiver is transitional, applying only to the last financial year. There was also an understanding that announcing the waiver after the end of the financial year meant that it would have been impossible for people to manipulate their income estimate to exploit the \$1,000 waiver.

Once the waiver had been discussed in more depth, a number of issues were raised with respect to its rationale:

While \$1,000 was seen as quite a generous amount of money, it was considered to be an arbitrary figure.

Many perceived the waiver to be a case of "scoring political points". However, given most were unaware of the waiver prior to attending the group, it seemed odd to many that they were receiving news about the waiver now, rather than prior to the election. Similarly, many participants saw the waiver as a way of minimising anger or disgruntlement regarding overpayments. Several participants believed that the

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government must perceive some fault on its part, questioning, *“Does the government feel guilty?”*

The wording of letters, specifically, “To assist families adjust to the new system”, led a few participants to question *“What is this ‘new system’?”* Furthermore, some did not realise that ‘new system’ refers to the existing system, with some asking, *“When is this going to be introduced?”*

On one version of the letter, the \$49 balance which also did not need to be repaid created confusion as to the waiver amount.

Finally, a few saw the waiver as unfair to those recipients of Family Tax Benefit or Child Care Benefit who had estimated their income correctly. As one participant said, *“Where’s my \$1,000?”*

Participants were asked what would happen if they had received more than their entitlement for both Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit. There was confusion regarding how the waiver applies to both Child Care Benefit and Family Tax Benefit:

Would the waiver relate to only one and not the other?

If it applies to both, would the total amount waived be \$1,000 or \$2,000?

How would the total be split across the two benefits?

This confusion was partly generated by the latter part (emphasis added) of this sentence:

“To assist families adjust to the new system, the Government has decided that, for the 2000-01 financial year only, families do not have to repay the first \$1000 of some Family Tax Benefit overpayments related to incorrect estimates of income or shared care or the first \$1000 of some Child Care Benefit overpayments.”

Update income estimate

The message regarding the need to update one’s income estimate was secondary to the messages regarding the overpayment and the waiver.

There are limits to the number of messages that any piece of communication can be expected to convey. However, in those letters where the recoverable overpayment is nil, there is a need to increase the salience of the income estimate message. This could be done by increasing the prominence of this message on the letter (many report they are unlikely to read the back of the letter, particularly where there is no prompt in the main text), or by drawing attention to this issue in an insert to accompany the overpayment letter.

An insufficient focus on this message risks limited or no action on the part of recipients, and further overpayments.

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Information regarding the facility for updating one's income estimate over the Internet was missed by most participants.

Payment options

There was an understanding that the money in excess of the waiver must be repaid to the Family Assistance Office. The provision of alternative payment methods was viewed positively. In particular, the option to phone and arrange a repayment schedule was welcomed and seen as compassionate.

The options for payment as lump sum were clear, reinforced by the payment slip at the bottom of the front page. Some commented that the option to make a payment at the post office was new, and was viewed favourably.

Many considered that the due date for repayment was insufficiently prominent in the letters. With respect to the timing of gradual repayments by way of a reduction in entitlements, this was unclear to participants, both in terms of when this would commence and how long it would take to repay the amount in full.

Some participants did not notice that deductions in their entitlement would function as the 'default' repayment option. Once this was brought to their attention, responses were mixed. Some liked the fact that no action would be required on their part. Others were unsettled by the idea that their entitlement would be reduced, perhaps without their knowing. Some participants expected that another letter would be sent prior to any deductions' commencing.

Some did not notice the flexibility in terms of the timing of gradual repayments, with some asking, "*What if I want to pay it off faster?*"

3.2 Tone

Participants described the tone as factual, non-threatening and appropriate. The tone was seen to be consistent with other communications from the Family Assistance Office.

As discussed above, some were cynical about the waiver and saw it as 'political point scoring'. However, the letter was not perceived as propaganda. Rather, the letter was viewed as Centrelink advising its customers in a neutral fashion of changes that had been made by the Government.

3.3 Text

While the progression of concepts presented in the letters was generally perceived to be logical, the specific text was found to be dense in parts. Some participants also perceived an overuse of jargon. This was partly related to the repeated mention of Child Care Benefit in the Child Care Benefit overpayment letters.

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Some sentences were considered to be overly long (some being three and four lines in length), and thus difficult to comprehend. It was suggested that concepts presented in these sentences could be made less confusing by breaking some of these sentences up into shorter ones.

Many expressed a preference for letters stating the recipient's actual income. Some saw this as useful as it could enable recipients to check their tax records with the actual income reported by Centrelink, so they could satisfy themselves that no mistake had been made in this respect.

The mention of Child Care Benefit on Family Tax Benefit letters (and vice versa) was seen by a number of participants to be irrelevant and confusing.

Confusion was also created by the lack of explanation as to why a balance of \$49 does not need to be repaid. Some wondered whether this meant the waiver was actually \$1,049, not \$1,000. Some thought a printing error had occurred.

Little to no comment was made on the final sections (eg "Rights", "Privacy") printed on the reverse of the letters. These are generally seen as standard for all correspondence from the Family Assistance Office.

3.4 Layout

The layout of the letters was attractive to most. However, some improvements could be made to enhance the communication of the messages in the letters.

Some commented that they do not normally read the back of letters received from the Family Assistance Office, perceiving that only standard information (such as 'Your Rights') appeared on the back of the letters. In addition, the bold black banner urging readers to "Please read the back of this letter" went unnoticed by many. Therefore, where there are key messages on the reverse side of these letters, it is important to clearly distinguish these from the standard information that is presented.

The layout of the letters, coupled with preconceived ideas of what a bill looks like, led many to see these letters as purely informative, rather than as a call to action. To communicate the necessary messages, **the letters need to achieve an appropriate balance between informing and motivating action.** A step towards achieving this might be for the totals and/or key information to appear on the front of the letters. With respect to the letters where the recoverable overpayment is nil, there is no need for the totals to appear on the front of the letter. Priority should be given to the information regarding the need to update one's income estimate in these letters, because the total of 'nil' on the front of the letters is likely to truncate reading.

3.5 Likely reactions

Many indicated that, upon receipt of a letter such as these, they would be inclined to check their own records to confirm that the overpayment had occurred as a result of their own actions (eg they had inaccurately estimated their family income).

In addition, many indicated they would be likely to contact the Family Assistance Office to clarify the information presented, or to update an income estimate. A majority of this contact would be likely to be via telephone. This is because it is habit for many to telephone with any queries they may have, and it is possible to speak with a person and ask questions. Telephone queues are anticipated by many, although most do not seem to be deterred by this, reasoning that they will eventually speak with someone. Others indicated that they would prefer to visit a branch so that they can speak with someone in person, and they would have a greater chance of being able to speak with the same staff member.

There appears to be limited awareness of the Family Assistance Office website, and, as mentioned above, few noticed the information regarding the online facility in the letters. Therefore, unless awareness is increased, few are likely to use this avenue as a way of updating their income estimate. However, the Internet option was seen by most to be convenient. In general, the key disadvantage of the Internet was that one would not be able to ask questions via this medium. A few were deterred by a lack of security over sensitive and private information, and others by the intangibility of the Internet (ie that no "hard" copy will exist anywhere).

Conclusions and recommendations

The letters clearly convey most of the messages, including the message that the customer has received more than their entitlement, and that the first \$1,000 of this overpayment will be waived. Furthermore, readers understand that monies in excess of the waiver must be repaid.

However, the message regarding the need to update their income estimate is, at best, secondary to the overpayment and waiver messages. Some improvements in both text and layout would help to ensure that the letters prompt appropriate action.

Text

Specifically, some of the longer sentences need to be broken up into shorter ones.

The following sentence requires revision, so that it is composed of shorter sentences that are easier to comprehend:

“To assist families adjust to the new system, the Government has decided that, for the 2000-01 financial year only, families do not have to repay the first \$1000 of some Family Tax Benefit overpayments related to incorrect estimates of income or shared care or the first \$1000 of some Child Care Benefit overpayments.”

It is the researchers’ view that the letters do not need to specify how the waiver will apply to those families receiving both Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit, as this issue did not appear to be raised spontaneously, but was prompted (either by the moderator or by its mention in this sentence). Furthermore, those recipients for whom this issue is relevant will receive a letter relating to Family Tax Benefit, and a separate letter relating to Child Care Benefit.

Given queries regarding ‘the new system’ and when it will come into being, if space permits, it may be advisable to expand ‘To assist families to adjust to the new system’ to read ‘To assist families to adjust to the new system, in which income estimates need to be provided’. This would also help to reinforce the income estimate message.

Consideration should also be given to including an explanation as to why an amount on some letters state ‘You do not need to repay this’, such as ‘Balances less than \$50 do not need to be repaid’.

Centrelink

Evaluation of FAMILY TAX BENEFIT & CHILD CARE BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT LETTERS

The tone of the letters is seen as appropriate and non-threatening. Any amendments to the text should adopt the same tone.

Layout

The layout needs to achieve a balance between the information and action components of the letters.

There are limits to the number of messages that any piece of communication can be expected to convey. However, in those letters where the recoverable overpayment is nil, priority should be given to the information regarding the need to update one's income estimate in these letters. This could be done by increasing the prominence of this message on the letter (many report they are unlikely to read the back of the letter, particularly where there is no prompt in the main text), or by drawing attention to this issue in an insert to accompany the overpayment letter.

Given the limited awareness of the option of providing details over the Internet, consideration should be given to increasing the prominence of the website address, perhaps by placing it in bold type.

Where there are key messages on the reverse side of these letters, it is important to distinguish these from the standard paragraphs (on Your Rights, Privacy, Customer Relations, Languages other than English) perhaps by separating them with some blank space from the standard information on the page.

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Appendix A – Discussion guide

Introduction

Thank for coming along

Introduction to market research / focus groups.

Moderator's role: to raise topics and issues and for you to tell me what you think.

No right or wrong answers, your opinion that counts. Please be honest.

Group rules: one person speaks at a time / feel free to disagree.

Audio / video taping, mirror. Reassure confidentiality.

Session will take approximately 1½ hrs.

Topic: Family Tax Benefit & Child Care Benefit

Handout incentives, mention bathroom facilities

Group participants to introduce themselves – indicate how many children they have, and how old they are, whether they are in school, whether they are in child care etc.

Letter evaluation

Moderator to distribute letters. “These are a draft of some letters that the Family Assistance Office may be sending to some benefit recipients in the future. We would like you to be assured that your participation in this group does not mean that you are more likely to receive any of these letters. Your selection for this group is entirely random from all benefit recipients”.

Participants look at letters, read.

Distribution order (to minimise the impact of any ordering effects):

Group 1 – CCF1 & CCF10 (notepad exercise – presentation order reversed in individual notepads for half of group), CCF7, CCF8. Then discuss FTB letters.

Group 2 – FTB6 & FTB8 (notepad exercise – presentation order reversed in individual notepads for half of group), FTB9. Then discuss CCB letters.

Group 3 – FTB6 & FTB9 (notepad exercise – presentation order reversed in individual notepads for half of group), FTB8. Then discuss CCB letters.

Group 4 - CCF1 & CF7(notepad exercise – presentation order reversed in individual notepads for half of group) CCF8, CCF10. Then discuss FTB letters.

Notepad exercise

1. What is the main thing the letter is trying to tell the reader?
2. Imagine you received this letter. What would be your likely reaction?
3. Is there anything that is unclear?

(Ask them to complete the demographics and collect notepads.)

General reactions and understanding (go through first letter, then repeat for alternate)

What was your immediate reaction to the information in the letter? Was it positive, or negative?

What is the main thing the letter is telling you? How do you feel about this information?

Are there any other messages the letter is attempting to convey?

How would you describe the tone of the letter? Is it positive or negative? What gives you this impression? Is it appropriate?

Understanding of content (with reference to both letters)

What might lead someone to receive more CCB/FTB than they were entitled to?

How is your level of entitlement calculated? What sort of things influence how much you receive?

What is the \$1,000 waiver? How does it work? Had you heard of this before? What is your reaction to it?

What is your understanding as to why has it been introduced?

For what period does the waiver apply to? [Probe to determine understanding of the waiver being only a transitional arrangement for the 2000 /01 financial year]

What if you were to have received more than your entitlement for both FTB and CCB? [Probe for knowledge of separate waivers for FTB and CCB]

Are there any aspects of the waiver that are still unclear?

What happens to outstanding amounts after the waiver is applied? Is the distinction between an overpayment and a recoverable overpayment understood? [Probe for understanding of having to pay back only outstanding amounts over \$49.99]

What are people's options for paying pack the excess that they have received? What is your reaction to these options?

If one took no action after reading the letter, what happens? (ie. what is the 'default'?)

Do you have to notify the Family Assistance Office if you accept the overpayment and understand the recovery arrangements?

How long does one have for repaying it? Do you feel this is a sufficient amount of time?

How might one avoid receiving an overpayment in the future?

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Content evaluation

Is there too much information or too little?

Do you think that there is any other information that should be included in these letters?

Is any of the information in the letters unclear or confusing?

Readability

Is it easy to read and understand?

Are there any terms that you don't understand or think are unclear?

How well does the text flow?

What do you think of the overall look of the letters? Are there any ways in which the letters can be improved?

Remaining letters

Again, discussion of how FTB/CCB is paid (ie whichever one has not yet been discussed). Participants asked to read remaining letters. Discuss one by one.

What is the main message of this letter? How does it differ from the others?

What is your reaction?

Is there anything that is unclear?

Likely reactions

If you were to receive one of these letters, do you think you would take any action?

What would you do? [i.e. check that estimate is correct etc] (Do they understand the consequences of not providing FAO with correct income estimates?)

If you had to update or check your current income estimate, in what ways could you do this? [Check for awareness of on-line, over the phone, in person - check for any knowledge of FAO offices within Medicare, ATO, Centrelink] Which of these would you be most likely to do? Why?

Are you motivated to find out more information about the reporting requirements that pertain to your particular situation? Why, or why not? Where would you go to find out more?

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Appendix B – Notepad questions

1. What is the main message the letter is trying to tell the reader?

2. Imagine you received this letter. What would be your likely reaction?

3. Is anything in the letter that is unclear to you or that you do not understand?

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A few questions about yourself

Your gender (please ✓):

Male Female

Your age (please ✓):

18-24 yrs
25-34 yrs
35-44 yrs
45-54 yrs
55+ yrs

Your average annual *household* income (please ✓):

\$0 – \$29,999
\$30,000 – \$39,999
\$40,000 – \$49,999
\$50,000 – \$59,999
\$60,000 – \$69,999
\$70,000 +

Are you a recipient of Family Tax Benefit? (please ✓)

Yes No

Are you a recipient of Child Care Benefit? (please ✓)

Yes No

Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 6

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Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard Page: CA 190/ 192/ 193/ 210

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) What Ministerial involvement was there in designing the FTB implementation process and timing?
- b) What was the date of the telephone hookup with area managers and call centre managers re the communicating the new waiver-related FTB reconciliation process?
- c) What is the daily success rate of FTB from its commencement
- d) What was the phone spiel given to the customer in terms of the \$1000 waiver?
- e) How many successful calls were made through customer service centres to families with debts over \$1000 tolerance level before 10 November election?
- f) How many calls were made to families with debts under \$1000 prior to 10 November?

Answer:

- a) The Minister's only involvement was recommending that the letters be market tested.
- b) The strategy of getting the call centre to make outbound calls for customers with debts under \$1000 and the Centrelink Service centres contacting those customers with debts over \$1000 was first discussed by phone hook up on 9 July 2001.
- c) The requested data is only available at the aggregated weekly level. The following data is the successful calls made to each customer during the outbound period, counting each customer once.

Week ending	Total
14/09/2001	221
21/09/2001	9,282
28/09/2001	8,480
5/10/2001	5,503
12/10/2001	5,817
19/10/2001	2,544
26/10/2001	2,099
2/11/2001	2,878
9/11/2001	3,285
16/11/2001	3,573
23/11/2001	3,078
30/11/2001	2,312
7/12/2001	2,268
14/12/2001	2,664
Christmas period	
4/01/2002	1,129
11/01/2002	543
18/01/2002	439
TOTAL	55,676

- d) The phone spiel changed after the legislation for the \$1000 waiver was passed.

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Phone spiel as at 6 September 2001;

My name is (CSO first name) from the Family Assistance Office, and I am ringing in relation to your payment of Family Tax Benefit and the \$1000 tolerance announced by the Government.

The Government announced on 1 July 2001 that there would be a \$1,000 tolerance for families who have a Family Tax Benefit (FTB) or Child Care Benefit (CCB) overpayment for 2000/01 income year because of underestimates of income or shared care.

Phone spiel as at 11 Oct 2001;

My name is (CSO first name) from the Family Assistance Office, and I am ringing in relation to your payment of Family Tax Benefit and the \$1000 waiver that is now available.

There is a \$1,000 waiver of the overpayment for families who have a Family Tax Benefit (FTB) or Child Care Benefit (CCB) overpayment for 2000/01 income year because of underestimates of income or shared care.

- e) 21,190 successful calls were made to families with debts over \$1000 before 10 November, first by customer service centres up to 26 October and then, due to a function transfer, by call centre staff beyond that date. Please note, 357 of these customers were originally assessed as having a debt under \$1,000 and since re-assessment based on additional information to having a debt over \$1,000 and were contacted again. Therefore they have been counted in both categories.

- f) 18,562 successful calls were made to families with a debt under \$1000 before 10 November. 357 of these customers were also included in the above data as their debt increased to over \$1,000 and they were contacted again.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 9

Topic: Breaching

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) Please provide figures for the year 2000-2001 detailing:
- The number of administrative breaches applied to individuals (by payment type and number and percentage of 1st, 2nd and 3rd breaches)?
 - The number of activity breaches applied to individuals (by payment type and number and percentage of 1st, 2nd and 3rd breaches)?
 - The total number of recommendations to breach, a) of an administrative nature and b) an activity nature (by payment type and number and percentage of 1st, 2nd and 3rd breaches)?
- b) Please provide figures for July 2001-February 2002 detailing:
- The number of administrative breaches applied to individuals (by payment type and number and percentage of 1st, 2nd and 3rd breaches)?
 - The number of activity breaches applied to individuals (by payment type and number and percentage of 1st, 2nd and 3rd breaches)?
 - The total number of recommendations to breach, a) of an administrative nature and b) an activity nature, that were not applied (by payment type and number and percentage of 1st, 2nd and 3rd breaches)?
- c) Please provide figures for the periods a) 2000-2001 financial year b) July 2001-February 2002 detailing the number of breach recommendations from Job Network providers?
- d) Please provide figures for the periods a) 2000-2001 financial year b) July 2001-February 2002 detailing the number of breach recommendations from Job Network providers that were overturned by Centrelink?
- e) Please provide figures for the periods a) 2000-2001 financial year b) July 2001-February 2002 detailing the number of breach recommendations that were overturned by Centrelink?
- f) Please provide figures for the periods a) 2000-2001 financial year b) July 2001-February 2002 detailing the number of breach recommendations that were overturned after review or appeal initiated by the customer?
- g) Has the Department / Centrelink developed a process for identifying at risk customers (of being breached) including a) people with a psychiatric disability b) homeless people c) people with alcohol or drug dependency d) young people?
- h) Please provide any a) trend data, b) 2000-2001 financial year c) July 2001-February 2002 figures on breach rates for each of these populations. Please break this down by payment type, 1st 2nd or 3rd breach, administrative or activity breach?

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Answer:

The methodology used to collect breach data requires that the extraction of data occur at the end of the month following the survey month. Current financial year breach data is only available to December 2001. Data by payment type, and multiple breach penalties applied to individuals, is not readily available. To obtain this data would require a significant diversion of Centrelink's resources. The data provided is based on the number of breach activities which were recorded.

- a) The number of administrative breach penalties imposed in 2000-01 is 92,199.

The number of activity test breach penalties imposed in 2000-01 is 294,747. Of these: 175,636 (59.9%) resulted in first breach penalties being imposed; 78,066 (26.6%) resulted in second breach penalties being imposed; and, 39,747 (13.5%) resulted in third and subsequent breach penalties being imposed.

There are no recommendations to breach. The Job Network provides participation reports to Centrelink, which Centrelink then investigates. A decision is made by Centrelink either to impose a penalty or not. Centrelink initiated decisions are not the subject of recommendations; penalties are imposed or not. Accordingly there is no information that can be gained to show how many times a breach activity was considered, only the numbers of decisions made to impose a penalty. The answer to the number of Job Network participation reports is at questions (C) and (D) below.

- b) The number of administrative breach penalties imposed from July to December 2001 is 25,895.

The number of activity test breach penalties applied in July to December 2001 is 119,555. Of these: 70,145 (58.7%) resulted in first breach penalties being applied; 32,280 (27.0%) resulted in second breach penalties being applied; and, 17,130 (14.3%) resulted in third and subsequent breach penalties being applied.

There are no recommendations to breach. The Job Network provides participation reports to Centrelink, which Centrelink then investigates. A decision is made by Centrelink either to impose a penalty or not. Centrelink initiated decisions are not the subject of recommendations; penalties are imposed or not. Accordingly there is no information that can be gained to show how many times a breach activity was considered, only the numbers of decisions made to impose a penalty.

- c) There are no recommendations to breach. The Job Network provides participation reports to Centrelink, which Centrelink then investigates. A decision is made by Centrelink either to impose a penalty or not. Centrelink initiated decisions are not the subject of recommendations; penalties are imposed or not. Accordingly there is no

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information that can be gained to show how many times a breach activity was considered, only the numbers of decisions made to impose a penalty.

The number of participation reports received from Job Network providers is:

2000-01 financial year	215,732
July to December 2001	96,670

- d) There are no recommendations to breach. The Job Network provides participation reports to Centrelink, which Centrelink then investigates. A decision is made by Centrelink either to impose a penalty or not. Centrelink initiated decisions are not the subject of recommendations; penalties are imposed or not. Accordingly there is no information that can be gained to show how many times a breach activity was considered, only the numbers of decisions made to impose a penalty.

The number of participation reports received from Job Network providers that have been received and subsequently not applied or revoked after review is:

2000-01 financial year	117,672
July to December 2001	63,232

- e) The number of breach activities which do not result in the imposition of a breach penalty (this includes: the number of participation reports that have been received and subsequently not applied or revoked after review; the number of breach penalties that have been revoked after review; and, the number of breach activities that were raised in error) is:

2000-01 financial year	279,065
July to December 2001	141,001

- f) Centrelink does not collect data on the number of breach decisions overturned by the original decision maker, however, decisions reviewed by ARO, SSAT and AAT are as follows:

Activity test & Administrative breach appeals that were successful for period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001

	Total ARO	No. set aside	Percentage
Activity test breach	13,550**	4,530	33%
Admin. breach	3	2	66%

** Includes 264 appeals that were due to disagreeing with previous reason. Unable to provide original reasons, 43 were set aside.

NB ** Includes 602 appeals that were varied.

	Total SSAT	No. set aside	Percentage
Activity test breach	1113**	591	53%
Admin. breach	1	0	0%

** Includes 36 appeals that were due to disagreeing with previous reason. Unable to provide original reasons, 3 were set aside.

NB ** Includes 14 appeals that were varied.

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	Total AAT	No. set aside	Percentage
Activity test breach	86**	12	14%
Admin. breach	0	0	0%

** Includes 7 appeals that were due to disagreeing with previous reason. Unable to provide original reasons, 2 were set aside.

Activity test & Administrative breach appeals that were successful for period 1 July '01 to 31 Dec. '01

	Total ARO	No. set aside	Percentage
Activity test breach	4760**	1085	22.8%
Admin. breach	0	0	0.00%

** Includes 121 appeals that were due to disagreeing with previous reason. Unable to provide original reasons, 29 were set aside.

NB ** Includes 194 appeals that were varied

	Total SSAT	No. set aside	Percentage
Activity test breach	289**	87	30.1%
Admin. breach	0	0	0.0%

** Includes 11 appeals that were due to disagreeing with previous reason. Unable to provide original reasons, 1 set aside.

NB ** Includes 6 appeals that were varied

	Total AAT	No. set aside	Percentage
Activity test breach	27**	11	40.7%
Admin. breach	0	0	0

** Includes 3 appeals that were due to disagreeing with previous reason. Unable to provide original reasons, 1 set aside.

NB ** Includes 1 appeal lodged by the Secretary and set aside

g) **Government Initiatives on Breaching**

Temporary Suspension of Payments - will be implemented from 1 July 2002

Under the old system, job seekers who miss an interview and, after several attempts, cannot be contacted by Centrelink, are subject to breaching. That would mean an automatic reduction in their payment for a set period of time. Once the breach was imposed, payments could only be reinstated after a successful appeal. The problem with this old system was that it could be too harsh on vulnerable people. From 1 July 2002, Centrelink will be able to temporarily suspend payments when a job seeker has failed to meet their obligations and cannot be contacted rather than breaching them. By suspending payments, customers will be encouraged to come into Centrelink and their issues will be able to be worked through. If customers provide a reasonable excuse for failing to attend an interview then payments will be fully restored from the date of suspension.

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Broadening the Breach Waiver Provisions – will be implemented from 1 July 2002

People on Newstart can already have an activity test breach penalty waived if they start Work for the Dole or an activity under the Community Support Program, soon to be the Personal Support Program. Under the new system, people who start a rehabilitation program through the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service or formal vocational training as part of a specified labour market program will also be able to have their activity test breach waived.

Change of Breach Penalty for Failing to Attend an Interview – will be implemented from 1 July 2002

The penalty for failing to attend an interview without a reasonable excuse will now become an administrative breach rather than an activity test breach. This will attract the lesser penalty of a 16 per cent reduction of payments for 13 weeks instead of the harsher activity test breach penalties, a minimum of an 18% rate reduction for 26 weeks.

Monitoring of Preparing for Work Agreements - will be implemented from 1 July 2002

Currently, when a person agrees to undertake a particular activity under a Preparing for Work Agreement there is not always a formal mechanism for following up on the success or otherwise of the activity. Centrelink will now have more time with individual job seekers to review what they have done, look at their personal circumstances and any obstacles to participation, and to plan follow-up activities to give job seekers the best chance of finding a job or further improving their employment prospects.

Third Breach Alert - commenced June 2001

The Centrelink 'Third Breach Alert' commenced on a national basis in June 2001 and is activated when a third breach for a customer is being considered. At this time, consultation with a specialist officer (eg. Social Worker or Occupational Psychologist) takes place to consider whether the customer has any special needs or may lack the capacity to comply with their mutual obligation requirements. It is part of Centrelink's move to improve staff's ability to identify those who are most at risk of being breached and allows more opportunity to help customers understand and comply with their obligations. Updated training materials have been developed and distributed to Centrelink staff.

2nd Breach Intervention - pilot from August 2001

This strategy, currently in place as a pilot from August 2001, occurs after the imposition of a second breach. At this time, the customer is called in for an interview aimed at identifying any factors that may be contributing to the likelihood of a subsequent breach. The obligations of the customer are reinforced at this interview and measures may be taken to prevent them incurring further breach penalties. Specialist officers also assist if required. The Pilot is currently being evaluated with a final report due to be released in June 2002. This report will include recommendations

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about which elements of the pilot should be rolled out across the network at a time to be decided.

Verification of Earnings Project - pilot from February 2001

Commencing in February 2001, this pilot project provides customers with a form to assist them to accurately declare their earnings from employment and by requiring them to provide third party verification of their earnings. The pilot is currently being evaluated. The preliminary results, which focuses on the pilot's effect on reducing customer debt, show an increased accuracy for payments affected by earnings as well as high levels of satisfaction from customers and employers.

"At Risk" Profiling - will be implemented from 1 July 2002

This initiative will be implemented from 1 July 2002 and will involve the use of an online tool that will identify customers with characteristics that indicate that they are potentially vulnerable customers (eg. those at risk of social and economic marginalisation). This information will be immediately available at the time that breach considerations are made and will allow Centrelink to target its interventions to customers most at risk. Initially this will impact on Age Pension, Newstart, Youth Allowance – job seekers and students, and Parenting Payment customers.

The initiative was announced by Minister Vanstone in October 2001.

Under 18 Youth at Risk Strategy - implemented in November 2000

Centrelink has established procedures for developing Preparing For Work Agreements for youth under 18 at risk of disconnecting from mainstream society. Guidelines have been developed which will ensure that PFWAs for young people develop appropriate activities to maintain income support, accommodate their personal circumstances and minimise their chances of being breached eg finding suitable accommodation, drug and alcohol education.

Homebound Program

Centrelink is hosting 50 Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) workers for two and half days within Centrelink offices focussing on the development of a good working relationship between Centrelink and SAAP services. This will ensure a better integrated service approach to the needs of homeless customers and will lead to a greater understanding of the service providers' various perspectives. Centrelink staff members will also spend a day in a SAAP service.

- h) It is not possible to discern how many: people with a psychiatric disability; homeless people; and, people with alcohol or drug dependency incur breach penalties. Therefore, there is no breach data available for these populations. If disadvantaged job seekers such as these, inform Centrelink of their situation they are not asked to meet the same requirements as other, less disadvantaged job seekers.

Limited breach data is available based on age. To obtain the data requested for the young people population would require a significant diversion of Centrelink's resources. The following data is provided for customer's under the age of 25 that have incurred a breach penalty.

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Customers under the age of 25 attract the largest proportion of breach penalties imposed.

Activity Test breach penalties

2000-01 financial year	144,801
July to December 2001	59,243

Administrative breach penalties

2000-01 financial year	53,081
July to December 2001	15,715

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Output Group: Centrelink.....Question No: 65

Topic: Breaching

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator **Crossin** asked:

What proportion of breaches are reviewed by the ARO and what proportion of breaches are reviewed then by the Social Security Appeal Tribunal.

Answer:

In the financial year 2000-2001 there were 13,553 breach appeals referred to the ARO, of which 4,532 were set aside.

Subsequently, there were 1,114 appeals referred to the SSAT, of which 591 were set aside.

There were a total of 391,478 breaches imposed during that financial year.

3.7% of all imposed breaches are appealed to the ARO or SSAT.

1.3% of all imposed breaches are overturned.

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Output Group: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Question No: 64

Topic:

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) Please provide details of the Institute's planned program of events, seminars and publications for the next twelve months.
- b) The Institute's 2000-01 Annual Report notes on page 9 that:

The Minister may request the Board to arrange for the Institute to engage in a particular activity and after consultation with the board specify the priority to be given to the activity.

The report says no such requests were made in 2000-01.

Were any requests made by the Minister of the Institute between the end of the financial year 2001 and today? If so, please provide details of each request and the details of activities?

- c) The Institute's three-year research program is to be renewed from June 2002. What consultations have been undertaken and with whom in the development of the new program?
- d) Please detail any research the Institute has conducted during the last five years into family living standards / poverty?
- e) Can you provide the results of the staff evaluation survey detailed on page 67 of the Institute's Annual Report?

Answer:

- a) The publications and events below represent those currently planned for the next 12 months. However, other publications may be produced depending on, for example, research contracted to the Institute.

Publication /Event	Publication Date
<i>Annual Report</i>	October 2002
<i>Family Matters</i>	
No. 61- Autumn 2002	April 2002
No. 62 - Winter 2002	August 2002
No. 63 - Spring/Summer 2002	December 2002
<i>Australian Family Briefing</i>	
<i>Family transitions: establishing independence and partnerships</i> Australian Family Briefing No. 12	September 2002
<i>Family transitions: having children</i> Australian Family Briefing No.13	September 2002
<i>Family transitions: separation and reformation</i> Australian Family Briefing No. 14	September 2002
<i>Research Reports</i>	
<i>Family-friendly work practices</i> , Research Report No. 7	April 2002

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<i>Towards a National Research Partnership for Developmental Health and Wellbeing</i> Research Report No. 8	May 2002
<i>Pathways to Adolescent Antisocial and Criminal Behaviour Project 1st Report</i>	April 2002
<i>Pathways to Adolescent Antisocial and Criminal Behaviour Project 2nd Report</i>	February 2003
Research papers	
<i>Sole mothers and employment</i>	April 2002
<i>Making marriages last</i>	May 2002
<i>Nature and distribution of social capital in families and communities</i>	May 2002
<i>Development in diverse families: background to research</i>	May 2002
<i>Child care and parenting across cultures</i>	July 2002
<i>Social capital and civic life</i>	September 2002
<i>Social capital and the labour market</i>	October 2002
<i>Social capital: getting by and getting ahead</i>	November 2002
National Child Protection Clearing House Newsletter	
Winter 2002	June 2002
Spring 2002	November 2002
Issues in Child Abuse Prevention	
<i>Community Education Campaigns</i>	June 2002
Topic to be confirmed	November 2002
Stronger Families Bulletin	
Bulletin No. 1	March 2002
Bulletin No.2	September 2002
Longitudinal Study of Australian Children	
Discussion Paper No 1	April 2002
Discussion Paper No 2	January 2003
Annual Report	January 2003
Book	
<i>Change and diversity in Australian families</i>	August 2002
AIFS Seminar Series	
<i>'Closing the social work education - child protection gap in Canada: being realistic, or compromising social work education principles?'</i> Professor Andrew Armitage , University of Canada	21 st March 2002
<i>'The policy implications of state government research on social capital'</i> Dr David Adams, Director, Policy Development and Research, Department of Premier and Cabinet (VIC)	18 th April 2002
<i>' Parenthood and the impossibility of divorce'</i> , Professor Patrick Parkinson, Faculty of Law, University of Sydney	20 th June 2002
<i>'The 4th round follow up of the Wards leaving care study: 4-5 years after they have left'</i> Dr Judy Cashmore, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales	15 th August 2002
Seminars will also be held in May, July , September, October and November. Speakers have yet to be confirmed for these seminars.	
AIFS Conference	Date to be confirmed

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- b) No requests have been made between the 1 July 2001 and 1 March 2002.
- c) The Institute's research program is to be renewed from July 2002, as part of the Institute's 2002-2005 Strategic Plan.

Internal consultation has been ongoing among the Institute's staff, Executive Management Group and with the Board of Management. External consultation has, to date, occurred with project partners, and funders. The Institute's future research directions were outlined in an article published Family Matters No. 60 in December 2001 and readers were invited to comment directly to the Institute about research priorities. Initial discussions have also taken place on individual research proposals and plans with the Department of Family and Community Services and the Attorney General's Department.

The next phase of the planning process is the development of a discussion paper outlining the proposed Institute objectives and strategies, including detail of ongoing and proposed new research. This will be circulated among stakeholders including: the Minister for Family and Community Services; the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs; the Institute's research partners; relevant officers and branches of the Department of Family and Community Services and other government agencies including- the Child Support Agency; Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Australian Bureau of Statistics; the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Office for the Status of Women. Key academics, research centres and family service provider agencies will also be included in consultations. The discussion paper will be available online at the Institute's web site, and readers will have an opportunity to comment, in writing on the paper.

- d) The Institute has not conducted any studies specifically of living standards or poverty in the last five years. An examination of post-divorce financial living standards was made as part of the broader Australian Divorce Transitions Project. *Financial living standards after divorce: a recent snapshot*, Research Paper No.23, was published in December 2000. A *Family Matters* article by the same title was published in May 2000.

Poverty and living standards were key themes of the Institute's 1998 and 2000 conferences, with a number of papers at each conference by researchers from such organisations as the Social Policy Research Centre, National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, Department of Family and Community Services and the Brotherhood of St Laurence. These papers are available on the Institute's web site. The Spring/Summer 1998 and Spring/Summer 1999 editions of Family Matters contained articles on family poverty and child poverty, authored by researchers from the Social Policy Research Centre.

The Institute also produced *A Guide To Calculating The Costs Of Children* in January 2000, on alternative approaches to measuring the costs of children.

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e)

Question	Responses	
How do you rate AIFS recruitment procedures. Do you feel that selection outcomes at AIFS are based on merit	Excellent	14%
	Very Good	50%
	Good	9%
	Satisfactory	9%
	Unsatisfactory	9%
	No ranking	9%
What is your understanding of Workplace Diversity and APS Values	Excellent	18%
	Very Good	18%
	Good	55%
	Satisfactory	0%
	Unsatisfactory	5%
	No ranking	5%
Do you feel you work in an equitable, flexible, supportive work environment.	Excellent	32%
	Very Good	27%
	Good	32%
	Satisfactory	5%
	Unsatisfactory	5%
	No ranking	0%
To what extent have Workplace Diversity principles been integrated into Work Programs.	Excellent	9%
	Very Good	14%
	Good	36%
	Satisfactory	18%
	Unsatisfactory	0%
	No ranking	23%
How do you rate the new OH&S policy and the impact of OHS training on your working environment	Excellent	18%
	Very Good	36%
	Good	18%
	Satisfactory	14%
	Unsatisfactory	9%
	No ranking	5%

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*Provided to committee by
 Sen Bishop at hearing on
 21.2.02*

Selected Appropriations	2001-02				2002-03				2003-04				2004-05				TOTAL
	2001-2002 Budget		MYEFO		2001-2002 Budget		MYEFO		2002-2003 Budget		MYEFO		2003-2004 Budget		MYEFO		
Family Tax Benefit	10465.075		10632.964		10781.033		11054.452		10722.011		11244.814		11520.746				1632.346
MYEFO			256.936		445.533		463.581		463.581		466.296		466.296				
Child Care Benefit	1166.245		1260.062		1363.912		1392.621		1186.16		1297.742		1402.935		1512.423		216.4
MYEFO			19.915		37.66		39.023		119.802		119.802		119.802				
Newstart Allowance	5214.3		5044.356		4945.75		5147.543		5436.323		5510.829		5534.478		5820.527		1950.208
MYEFO			222.023		466.473		500.728		672.984		672.984		672.984				
Disability Support Pension	6269.64		6671.178		7128.183		7511.553		6353.471		6778.7		7311.838		7721.35		584.805
MYEFO			83.831		107.522		183.655		209.797		209.797		209.797				
Age Pension	16483.605		17385.721		18263.055		19104.297		16544.225		17502.732		18485.496		19396.881		652.566
MYEFO			30.53		137.011		222.441		222.441		222.441		222.441				
TOTAL (selected Approps)/+/-	663.235		1194.199		1497.428		1681.463		5035.325		5035.325		5035.325				

Sources:
 (1) 2000-2001 Budget: fwd estimates - provided by FaCS during Budget Estimates: May 2001
 (2) MYEFO Forward Estimates - provided by FaCS to the A.P through 'caremaker conventions' following release of MYEFO in October 2001

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Output Group: Cross All Outputs

Question No: 7

Topic: Compliance

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) What are the details of all Budget and Non-Budget measures implemented since 1996 to improve compliance, increase debt recovery, and reduce fraud and overpayment including: (a) a brief description of each measure implemented; (b) anticipated savings by year for each measure at the time of announcement; (c) evidence of realised savings by year for each measure after implementation?
- b) What is the full-time equivalent staffing by year in Centrelink debt recovery teams since the agency's inception?
- c) What is the full-time equivalent staffing by year for Private Investigators engaged since the announcement of the initiative?
- d) Detail the number of cases: (a) referred ; (b) investigated ; and, (c) finalised; by private investigators in each year since the announcement of the initiative?
- e) For each year since the announcement of the private investigator initiative detail the: (a) cancelled or reduced payments; (b) prosecutions; (c) identified debts; (d) savings from future outlays?
- f) With reference to the new compliance measures announced by the Government in October 2001 and detailed in the FaCS Additional Estimates Statement (a) what methodology was used to quantify the anticipated savings? (b) What evidence is available to support the methodology adopted to calculate anticipated savings?

Answer:

- a) Details as requested for each compliance initiative since 1996 are at [Attachment A](#).
- b) Centrelink Debt Recovery Teams staffing levels for period 1997/1998 to 2001/2002 (31 December 2001)

FTE Staff Numbers 1997/1998	FTE Staff Numbers 1998/1999	FTE Staff Numbers 1999/2000	FTE Staff Numbers 2000/2001	FTE Staff Numbers 2001/2002
395	372	339	320	280

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- c) A total of 18 firms are contracted to provide surveillance services. Of those 18 firms, 176 surveillance provider personnel have been security cleared to 'PROTECTED' level to carry out Centrelink referrals. Since the commencement of the initiative in July 1999 Centrelink has been invoiced a total of \$2.96 million for surveillance services.
- d) and e)

Financial Year	Cases Referred to Surveillance Providers	Cases Finalised by Centrelink (1)	Cases Involving a Debt or Reduction in Payment	Cases referred for prosecution	Annual Savings (\$m) (2)	Debts identified for recovery action (\$m)
1999/00	1,446	1,063	747	72	4.2	4.0
2000/01	2,271	2,174	1,477	114	8.0	6.8
2001/02 (YTD to 31 Jan 2002)	1,133	1,359	1,040	101	5.0	6.1

Notes

- (1) Number of cases finalised in the financial year. This may include cases that were referred for surveillance in a previous financial year but were not finalised until the financial year shown in the table.
 - (2) The annual savings represent savings to program outlays per fortnight multiplied by 26 fortnights.
 - (3) Prosecutions data is to end March 2002.
- d) The savings calculations for additional estimates are based on actual results from existing review activity. In 2000/2001 TDF matches identified an average downward variation of \$237 and an average debt of \$680. Tip-off reviews identified an average downward variation of \$222 and an average debt of \$2866.

The calculation of savings is in accordance with a formula agreed with the Department of Finance and Administration. Under the formula, it is assumed that customers whose rate of payment is reduced or cancelled as a result of a review, will either not resume the former rate of payment (or not come back into pay if they are cancelled) for 26 fortnights. Payments which are restored within 6 weeks are not included in savings calculations. Because customers will be cancelled progressively throughout the year, actual savings can result both in the current and next financial year. In addition, total savings include 91% of the value of debts raised as a result of review action. Actual savings achieved to date for 2000-01 comprise 50% of downward variations identified in 1999-00 + 50% of downward variations identified in 2000-01 + 91% of total debt identified in 2000-01.

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	1996-97 \$m	1997-98 \$m	1998-99 \$m	1999-00 \$m	2000-01 \$m	2001-02 \$m	2002-03 \$m	2003-04 \$m	2004-05 \$m	Total \$m
1996-97 Budget										
<i>Improve overpayment raising and debt recovery (changes to chapter 5)</i>										
Estimated Savings	-4.81	-16.99	-27.75	-35.18						-84.73
Savings achieved to date	-19.8	-28.2	-29.6	-34.6						-112.20
Comment:										
1997-98 Budget										
<i>Improvements to the data matching program and increased review activity</i>										
Estimated Savings		-20.49	-35.83	-43.72	-44.81					-144.85
Savings achieved to date		-28.61	-44.70	-59.44	-59.51					-192.26
Comment:										
<i>Increased ATO Employment Declaration Form (EDF) matching with DSS data</i>										
Estimated Savings		-33.34	-33.32	-34.15	-35.01					-135.82
Savings achieved to date		-36.01	-35.58	-31.42	-36.89					-139.90
Comment:										
November 1998 Cabinet Submission										
<i>Enhanced Investigation Initiative</i>										
Estimated Savings			-10.38	-19.26	-20.55	-20.55				-70.74
Savings achieved to date			0.00	-8.16	-12.27					
Comment: Forward estimates period not yet complete										
1999-00 Budget										
<i>Use TFN in Data Matching of ATO's EDF, PPS and RPS</i>										

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<i>info</i>										
Estimated Savings					-20.67	-29.70	-30.44			-80.81
Savings achieved to date					-20.51					
Comment: Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Data Match with Registrar-Generals' Offices birth records</i>										
Estimated Savings					-3.07	-0.57	0.00	0.00		-3.63
Savings achieved to date					0.00					
Comment: The pilot was not cost effective and therefore not continued. Minor savings were achieved in the first year.										
<i>Clarify, simplify and strengthen debt recovery</i>										
Estimated Savings					0.00	-34.52	-35.52	-36.68		-106.71
AE's 2000-01 - Estimated Savings						17.40	0.00	0.00		17.40
Bud 01-02 - Estimated Savings							0.00	0.00		0.00
Total current estimated savings					0.00	-17.12	-35.52	-36.68		-89.31
Savings achieved to date						-16.05				
Comment: Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Data Match Prescribed Payment System Data between Centrelink and ATO</i>										
Estimated Savings					-4.06	-5.78	-5.93	-6.09		-21.87
Savings achieved to date					-8.78	-3.89				
Comment: Forward estimates period not yet complete. Introduction of the new taxation system significantly reduced the number of people in the PPS system. As a result this initiative is expected to provide lower than estimated savings in the next 2 years.										
<i>Out-posted Centrelink/ATO Special Project Officers</i>										
Estimated Savings					-3.28	-4.57	-4.68	-4.81		-17.34
Savings achieved to date					-5.30	-9.86				

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Comment: Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Data Match with ASX CHESS records</i>										
Estimated Savings				-1.81	-1.03					-2.83
Savings achieved to date				0.00						
Comment: The pilot was not cost effective and therefore not continued. Minor savings were achieved in the first year.										
<i>Data Match with State and Territory Superannuation Administration Authorities</i>										
Estimated Savings				-4.59	-1.13					-5.72
Savings achieved to date				0.00						
Comment: The pilot was not cost effective and therefore not continued. Minor savings were achieved in the first year.										
<i>Improve assessment of undisclosed assets across income support payments</i>										
Estimated Savings				-1.48	-0.21					-1.69
Savings achieved to date				-2.48	-9.83					
Comment:										
<i>Survey Level and Reasons for Incorrect Payments for Major Income Support Payments</i>										
Estimated Savings				-2.03	-1.94					-3.97
Savings achieved to date				-3.73	-2.98					-6.71
Comment:										
2000-01 Budget										
<i>Random Sample Surveys of Aged Pension and Youth Allowance (3053)</i>										
Estimated Savings					-0.60	-0.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.86
Savings achieved to date					-1.22	-0.64				-1.86
Comment:										

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<i>Feasibility study to data match HIC compensation claim and payment records (3052)</i>										
Estimated Savings					-7.69	-11.11	-3.82	-0.31	0.00	-22.93
Savings achieved to date					-4.24					-4.24
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Feasibility study to data match against DIMA arrivals and visa records (3042)</i>										
Estimated Savings					-1.48	-0.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	-1.97
Savings achieved to date					-0.35					-0.35
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Feasibility study to data match against ATO Annuities and Superannuation Pension (3051A)</i>										
Estimated Savings					-3.35	-1.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	-4.85
Savings achieved to date					-0.62					-0.62
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Feasibility study to data match against ATO Reasonable Benefits Limits (3051B)</i>										
Estimated Savings					-3.35	-1.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	-4.85
Savings achieved to date					-0.20					-0.20
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Inter-agency Cash Economy Field Investigation Teams (3065)</i>										
Estimated Savings					-1.62	-5.26	-3.89	-0.93	0.00	-10.09
Savings achieved to date					-0.32					0.00
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete										

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<i>Increased Rent Assistance data matching reviews (3046)</i>										
Estimated Savings					-8.03	-15.57	-16.01	-16.46	0.00	-56.06
Savings achieved to date					-9.85					-9.85
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Data match with employment records held by DEWRSB (3044)</i>										
Estimated Savings					-10.76	-5.39	-2.84	-2.92	0.00	-21.91
Savings achieved to date					-8.63					-8.63
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Amend Data-Matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Act (3045)</i>										
Estimated Savings					-2.23	-4.59	-2.35	0.00	0.00	-9.16
Savings achieved to date					0.00					0.00
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete. Implementation was delayed due to technical difficulties in data matching. The initiative commenced in 2001/02										
<i>Exchange of data from ATO tip-off recording system and Centrelink tip-off recording system</i>										
Estimated Savings					-3.67	-17.16	-19.41	-20.41	0.00	-60.65
Savings achieved to date					-0.11					-0.11
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Publicity campaign to encourage customer compliance</i>										
Estimated Savings					0.00	-14.53	-21.93	-0.49	0.00	-36.95
Savings achieved to date										0.00
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete										
<i>Simplification Package</i>										
Estimated Savings					0.00	-1.14	-1.24	-1.78		-4.16

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Savings achieved to date												0.00
Comment: Forward estimates period not yet complete												
2001-02 Budget												
<i>Develop and pilot profiling of Centrelink customers (3569)</i>												
Estimated Savings							-2.17	-2.59	0.00	0.00		-4.76
Savings achieved to date												
Comment: This initiative has been absorbed into the 2001-02 Additional Estimates Risk Profiling initiative.												
<i>Data Matching ATO Rental Audit Schedule Data</i>												
Estimated Savings							-8.00	-11.13	-3.67	-1.01		-23.81
Savings achieved to date												
Comment: Forward estimates period not yet complete												
<i>Increased Tip-offs</i>												
Estimated Savings							-20.70	-34.98	-36.01	-37.07		-128.77
Savings achieved to date												
Comment: Forward estimates period not yet complete												
<i>Data Matching ATO ABN data</i>												
Estimated Savings							-1.30	-1.62	-0.29	0.00		-3.21
Savings achieved to date												
Comment: Forward estimates period not yet complete												
<i>Data matching ATO PAYG Payment Summary Data</i>												
Estimated Savings							-5.06	-6.46	-0.80	0.00		-12.32
Savings achieved to date												

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Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete											
<i>Random Sample Survey (DSP, PPP, PPS, CA/CP) (3534)</i>											
Estimated Savings							-4.22	-3.53	0.00	0.00	-7.75
Savings achieved to date											
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete											
2001-02 Additional Estimates											
<i>Risk Profiling</i>											
Estimated Savings							0.00	-117.00	-117.00	-117.00	-351.00
Savings achieved to date											
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete											
<i>Change in circumstances</i>											
Estimated Savings							-5.00	-26.00	-26.00	-26.00	-83.00
Savings achieved to date											
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete											
<i>Joint compliance with ATO</i>											
Estimated Savings							0.00	-96.00	-96.00	-96.00	-288.00
Savings achieved to date											
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete											
<i>Enhanced Tip-off facility</i>											
Estimated Savings							-12.00	-24.00	0.00	0.00	-36.00
Savings achieved to date											
Comment:Forward estimates period not yet complete											

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	Number of reviews	Downward variations (%)	Fortnightly Savings	Debts (%)	Debts Total Value	Total Annual savings (\$M)
1997-98 Budget						
<i>Increased ATO Employment Declaration Form (EDF) matching with DSS data</i>						
	70,000	5.4	\$897,044	33.8	\$16,136,120	\$39.46
<i>Improve Data matching Program and increase review activity</i>						
	80,000	3.3	\$206,741	56.2	\$53,153,561	\$58.52
November 1998 Cabinet Submission						
<i>Enhanced Investigation Initiative</i>						
	2,271	45.7	\$308,535	38.2	\$6,800,130	\$14.80
1999-00 Budget						
<i>Use TFN in Data Matching of ATO's EDF, PPS and RPS info</i>						
	54,730	5.4	\$685,814	33.8	\$13,347,594	\$31.12
<i>Data Match with Registrar-Generals' Offices birth records</i>						
	Pilot discontinued					
<i>Data Match Prescribed Payment System Data between Centrelink and ATO</i>						
	2,177	2.2	\$12,319	34.8	\$1,234,118	\$1.55
<i>Outposted Centrelink/ATO Special Project Officers</i>						
	4,533	11.9	\$81,538	44.7	\$8,553,702	\$10.67
<i>Data Match with ASX CHESS records</i>						
	Pilot discontinued					
<i>Data Match with State and Territory Superannuation Administration Authorities</i>						

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	Pilot discontinued					
<i>Improve assessment of undisclosed assets across income support payments</i>						
	6,412	28.9	\$176,203	18.9	\$7,174,890	\$11.76
<i>Survey Level and Reasons for Incorrect Payments for Major Income Support Payments</i>						
	Activity in 99/00 only					
2000-01 Budget						
<i>Random Sample Surveys of Aged Pension and Youth Allowance (3053)</i>						
	4,020	14.2	\$55,740	14	\$410,750	\$1.86
<i>Feasibility study to data match HIC compensation claim and payment records (3052)</i>						
	3,799	11.2	\$34,676	15.6	\$3,525,000	\$4.43
<i>Feasibility study to data match against DIMA arrivals and visa records (3042)</i>						
	354	12.6	\$6,480	37.3	\$270,921	\$0.44
<i>Feasibility study to data match against ATO Annuities and Superannuation Pension (3051A)</i>						
	3,000	19.8	\$20,836	12	\$348,411	\$0.89
<i>Feasibility study to data match against ATO Reasonable Benefits Limits (3051B)</i>						
	3,000	8.1	\$6,119	4.1	\$117,706	\$0.28
<i>Inter-agency Cash Economy Field Investigation Teams (3065)</i>						
	1,001	65.2	\$189,565	54.7	\$993,377	\$5.92
<i>Increased Rent Assistance data matching reviews (3046)</i>						
	90,933	15.1	\$1,309,223	4.4	\$1,489,789	\$35.53
<i>Data match with employment records held by DEWRSB (3044)</i>						
	24,417	2.7	\$208,434	30.8	\$7,004,650	\$12.42
<i>Amend Data-Matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Act (3045)</i>						
	Delayed implementation to July 2001					
<i>Exchange of data from ATO tip-off recording system and Centrelink tip-off recording system</i>						
	356	14.9	\$12,084	13.2	\$158,035	\$0.47
Figures are for savings identified in a financial year. Figures will differ from actual savings reported in Attachment A as savings for outyears comprise 50% of downward variations identified in previous year + 50% of downward variations identified in current year + 91% of total debt identified in current year. The balance between the downward variation effects and the debt amount will also determine the size of this difference in reported savings.						

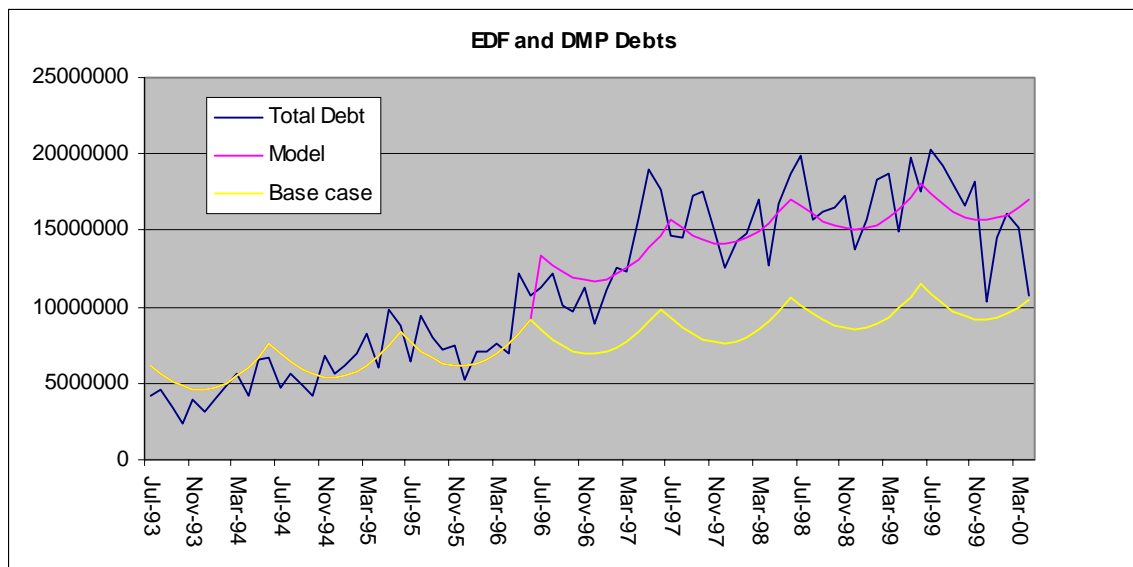
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SAVINGS METHODOLOGY AND SUPPORTING DATA
FOR DEBT RECOVERY MEASURES

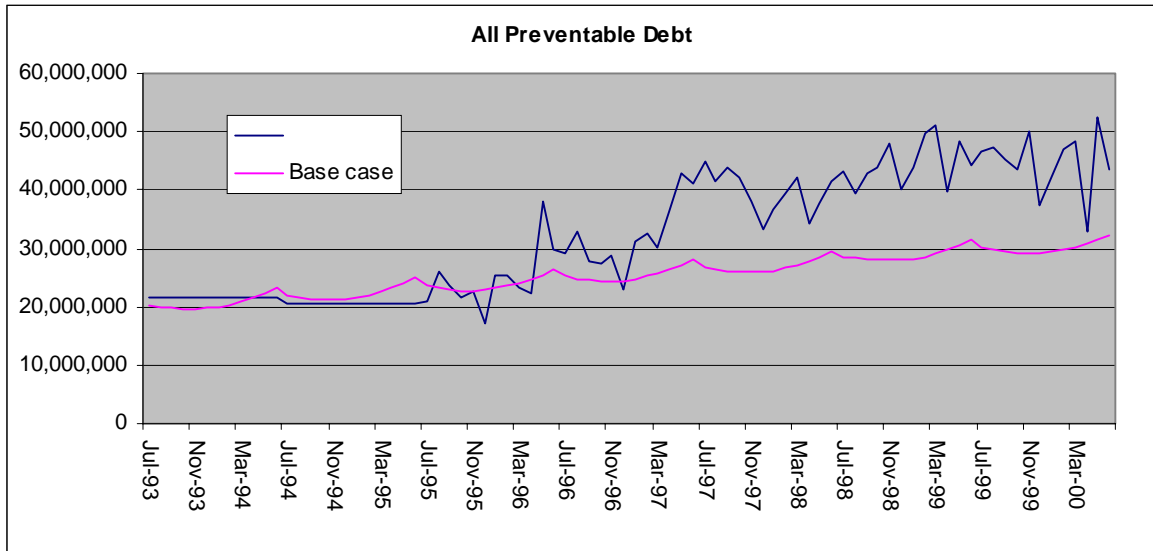
!996/97 Budget – Improve Debt Recovery

For Elements A & C, the change in the level of preventable debt was considered to be the most appropriate measure to report the impact of the changes. Preventable debt is defined as a subset of the total debt base after deducting outstanding advance payment debts, Assurance of Support debts, internal transfer debts, compensation debts, and other government department debts. The change in preventable debts was calculated as a single measure because the data contained in the DMIS system was unable to be broken down sufficiently to separate the impact of the additional resources and the revised legislation. The additional debts have been attributed to each element based on the original ratio contained in the Budget measure.

To calculate the additional preventable debts that could be attributed to the measure, the increase in preventable debt for measures introduced subsequent to this measure needed to be identified and extracted. This required the development of the statistical model explained at appendix 1.



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Summary	Total	Element A	Element C
1997-98	\$ 74,776,178	\$ 12,704,473	\$ 62,071,705
1998-99	\$ 108,893,756	\$ 29,673,548	\$ 79,220,207
1999-00	\$ 98,360,374	\$ 34,603,180	\$ 63,757,195

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Output Group: Cross All Outcomes

Question No: 60

Topic: Research and Consultancies

Hansard Page: Written question on notice & CA145-46.

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) Please explain the nature of the work undertaken by Colmar Brunton Social Research that is described in the annual report as “Research into welfare reform issues and messages”? Please provide a copy of the material submitted by Colmar Brunton for the \$54,905 they were paid?
- b) Please detail the nature of the work undertaken by IRIS Research that is described in the Annual Report as “Survey to examine opinions, attitudes and behaviours of internet users and gamblers”? Please provide a copy of the material submitted by IRIS Research for the \$54,546 they were paid?
- c) Please provide details of the nature of the work undertaken by Worthington Di Marzio that is described in the Annual Report as “Market Testing of Seniors Information”? Please provide a copy of the material submitted by Worthington Di Marzio for the \$69,500 they were paid?
- d) Please explain why \$63,000 was spent on infomercials promoting awareness of the Family Assistance Office? What were these infomercials used for and where and when were they screened?
- e) Please provide a comprehensive breakdown of both the ‘Advertising campaign introducing tax reform measures’ and ‘National radio and television advertising for the seniors campaign’ booked by Mitchell and Partners Australia and the work undertaken by Batey Kazoo, including dates, the size of the buy and where ads were broadcast?
- f) Can we have the results of the two AC Neilson surveys undertaken (page 354)?
- g) Please provide details of the work Corrs Chambers Westgarth undertook for the Department (page 357)? Which market-testing project did this work relate to?
- h) Please provide the results of the Donovan Research evaluation of the pre marriage education pilots (page 358)?
- i) Please provide details of what was provided by Future Perfect Communications in the two consultancies listed in the annual report (page 358)?
- j) Please provide details of the project undertaken by Howard Partners (page 358)?
- k) Please provide the methodologies and results of two projects conducted by Wallis Consulting (‘Retirement attitudes’ and ‘survey of unemployed customers’)(page 367)?

Answer:

- a) A copy of the report is attached.

[Note: attachments have not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

- b) The IRIS Research report ‘*The Impact of Banning Interactive Gambling Services*’ was released in October 2000.

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- Some studies on the incidence of gambling suggested that there was a significant connection between increased accessibility and prevalence of problem gambling. Given the increasing levels of access to the Internet by Australian households, there was a great deal of concern that this access would lead to increased gambling and therefore problem gamblers on the Internet.
- The Government was very interested to determine whether a ban which made access to any interactive gambling site very difficult, and prohibited all Australian-based regulated gambling sites, would discourage interactive gambling or would people still seek to access offshore unregulated sites?
- The survey was intended to address these issues with particular emphasis on determining people's interest in Internet gambling and whether they would actively seek alternative means of access if it were banned in Australia.
- The survey focused on current attitudes to gambling in general as well as specifically to gambling on the Internet. There were clear findings on:
 - Relationships between gambling access and gambling behaviour in Australia;
 - Extent of, and forecast increase of, Internet access – and by implication, Internet gambling access; and
 - The current state of attitudes relating to issues of Internet gambling, including the then possibility of a ban.
- The survey found support for a ban on Internet gambling with over 60% support across all age groups. More specifically, the lowest support was in the 25-34 age group at 63% support and the highest support was in the 65+ age group at 73% support.
- A copy of the report by IRIS Research is forwarded for information.

c) The release of the material is being considered.

d) The \$63,000 was spent on segments presented on Good Health Television. Good Health Television is a program that screens in 1200 medical practices and hospitals nationally. The information presented on Good Health Television is part of a comprehensive communication strategy on the payments and services available through the Family Assistance Office. The editorial type segment on the Family Assistance Office ran each day in the months of March, April and May 2001.

e) The information sought is still being gathered.

f) The *General Customer Survey* undertaken by AC Nielsen, is an on-going survey that collects a range of data from social security and family support recipients to facilitate policy analysis and development. In particular, it enables examination of important pathways for clients, such as school to work, unemployment to work, work to retirement, and social participation of aged people. Data collection began in April 2000, gathering information on family and household, education, children and childcare, employment, retirement, disability and caring, income and resources. The survey is voluntary and incorporates both cross-sectional and longitudinal aspects, following clients as they move on and off or between

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payments. All respondents are included in the panel for two follow-up interviews at 12-month intervals, while unemployed clients are also interviewed quarterly during the first year.

Unit record data for clients first interviewed in 2000 was recently released internally and a forthcoming departmental publication presenting cross-sectional findings from this data is currently being prepared. The Department will forward a copy of the publication to Senator Bishop once it is available. There are also plans to release the data to external researchers for commissioned research projects in the near future.

ACNielsen's work in regard to exploring customers' participation barriers included a number of surveys contributing to the Welfare Reform Pilots. These pilots were used to collect information on the current activities, future goals and participation barriers of three disadvantaged groups of FaCS customers (very long-term unemployed people, mature age jobless people and workless families) and to trial various interventions aimed at helping such customers increase their economic and social participation.

The pilots involved a series of three interview surveys over a six month period with 'intervention' and 'control' samples for each of the three pilot groups.

The first round of interviews took place in September 2000 (Wave 1), followed by second interviews in November 2000 (Wave 2), and final interviews (Wave 3) in April 2001. Over 10,000 participants were interviewed as part of intervention and control groups in the Wave 1 interviews. In Wave 2, a total of 8,320 interviews were conducted and, in Wave 3, 4,798 interviews.

ACNielsen has provided to FaCS data files containing de-identified data on those who participated in the telephone interviews. As well, ACNielsen has provided written reports to FaCS on the results of each wave of interviews it conducted. The results from the executive summaries of these reports are **attached**. The ACNielsen reports have not been released publicly. A FaCS report on the results for the intervention groups at Wave 1 is currently in final draft form. It is planned to publish this report and to make it available on the FaCS internet site. A second FaCS report on the results of the trial of interventions will be available later this year when analysis of data is completed.

g) Corrs Chambers Westgarth provide legal and probity advice in support of the Department's activity in the market testing of corporate services. Corrs Chambers Westgarth were engaged following a select tender process, in which responses were invited from firms on the Department of Finance Competitive Tendering and Contracting panel contract.

h) The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs recommended in its *To Have and To Hold* report (June 1998) that a scheme for pre-marriage services should be provided to all couples marrying in Australia.

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- A pre-marriage education pilot scheme was implemented which had two components, a pre-marriage voucher (launched in October 1999) and a pre-marriage resource kit (launched June 2000). These were trialed in Launceston and Perth. The pilot ended on 31 October 2000.
- Donovan Research undertook and finalised the evaluation of the pre-marriage education pilot scheme in February 2001. A copy of the evaluation report is attached.
- Some of the key findings of the evaluation are:

Voucher

- 90% of those who used the voucher said they thought the activity was useful
- 63% said that the education had improved their communication skills
- 96% of those who used the voucher would recommend relationship education to others

Kit

- 98% of couples who used the kit said it contained useful information
- 100% found it easy to use and understand
- 98% liked that they could use it at home

The report is available electronically at:

http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/fre-pre_marriage_evaluation.htm

i) Item 1 - Input into the Welfare Reform communications strategy

An early working document for a communications strategy to successfully communicate welfare reform. It provided early thinking that fed into deliberations around communication activities to allow more detailed sub-strategies to be developed.

Item 2 - Input into the internal Welfare Reform communications strategy

An internal communications plan developed in consultation with areas across Family and Community Services, designed to explain the Federal Government's welfare reform package to the staff of the Department of Family and Community Services and its agencies.

j) Howard Partners Pty Ltd was contracted to conduct research relevant to a review of the Business Partnership Agreement (BPA) between the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) and Centrelink.

The Department was about to enter into negotiations for a new, three-year agreement with Centrelink for the programs, payments and services it delivered on behalf of FaCS (the Business Partnership Agreement 2001-2004).

The final report contained an overview of purchaser/provider issues generally and specifically the purchaser/provider arrangements operating in the social welfare sector in Australia and overseas. Aspects which were considered were the overseas experience; the relationships that operate in other Australian Government agencies and at the State Government level; problem

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areas in agreements; how these problems were resolved and future directions of such arrangements here and overseas.

The Department decided to tender for the project because of the need for specialist expertise. The total cost of the consultancy was \$25,200. Howard Partners was chosen in a restricted tender because of their existing subject knowledge.

The consultants provided an oral presentation to officers involved in the negotiations, a literature review and recommendations for the Department to consider in its review of the BPA. The recommendations informed the process of negotiating the BPA.

k) The Wallis Group was commissioned by FaCS in April 2000 to undertake the Activity Test Evaluation Customer Survey, a survey of unemployed people receiving Newstart Allowance (NSA) and Youth Allowance (YA(o)). A copy of Wallis's report is attached, and is available electronically at <http://www.facs.gov.au/Internet/FaCSInternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/esp-wallis.htm>

Methodology: Three thousand NSA and YA(o) customers were interviewed during July and August 2000. The survey questionnaire used in these interviews was based on qualitative research consisting of five focus groups in metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Results:

Awareness and Attitudes - The survey revealed that customers had a high level of understanding of job search and administrative requirements of the activity test:

- 85% spontaneously cited the need to 'actively look for work' as a requirement of the activity test.

The survey indicated a broad level of support for the concept of mutual obligation:

- 49% of respondents agreed that 'unemployed people should have to do more than just look for work in order to stay on benefits'
- 82% agreed that 'jobseekers receiving unemployment payments should have to do activities that will improve their chances of finding work'
- 62% agreed that 'people should have to do something of benefit to the community in return for their unemployment payment'.

There was widespread support for the existing penalty regime for non-compliance with the activity test:

- 78% of respondents agreed that 'jobseekers not meeting their activity test requirements without a 'reasonable' explanation should have their payments reduced for a period of time'. 69% of those who had actually been breached agreed with this statement
- 57% of respondents believed that the size of current penalty rates was 'about right'. 45% of those who had actually been breached agreed that the current penalty rates were 'about right'.

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Specific Job Search Provisions

Jobseeker Diaries (JSDs) - Of those respondents who were required to complete a JSD:

- 88% stated that having to do so helped them keep track of the jobs they had applied for
- 23% indicated that they were more active in their job search than they would otherwise have been
- 59% disagreed with the statement that ‘most of the jobs they applied for were unsuitable’.

Employer Contact Certificates (ECCs) - There were mixed perceptions of ECCs.

- 47% of respondents who were required to complete ECCs felt that this helped them to keep looking for work
- 46% agreed that they would not ask an employer to fill in an ECC if they were applying for a job in which they were particularly interested.

Mutual Obligation/Work for the Dole - Respondents who had participated in Mutual Obligation and Work for the Dole had positive views of these activities:

- 85% of respondents felt that this participation helped them establish a work routine
- 79% felt better about themselves as a result of the activity
- 73% agreed that they had gained useful skills.

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Output Group: Cross All Outcomes

Question No: 67

Topic: Daily Press Clippings

Hansard Page: CA151

Senator Bishop asked:

Can the department please provide a full list of the recipients of daily press clippings and what the cost is?

Answer:

The Department of Family and Community Services, the Minister for Family and Community Services, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Family and Community Services receive daily press clippings.

Costs for the month of February 2002 per day were:

Department of Family and Community Services \$447.50
Minister Vanstone's Office \$19.06
Minister Anthony's Office \$35.63
Ross Cameron's Office \$8.99

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FAO Reconciliation Impact Assessment
21/3/01

FAO Reconciliation - Impact Assessment

This paper focus' on the impact of FAO reconciliation at the CSC level. It includes an explanation of the background, a description of likely demand using month by month scenarios, a description of the type of work expected and some broad thinking on strategies including specific work done at the national level.

While focusing primarily on CSC FAO Teams the last section identifies non FAO staff who may also be impacted by reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a complex process involving multiple events. For the sake of clarity I have concentrated on the major events which will impact at CSC level.

Background

Family Tax Benefit (FTB) fortnightly payments and Child Care Benefit (CCB) percentages are struck by using a current year income estimate, provided by customers, for customers and (where appropriate) their partner. From 1 July 2001 FTB and CCB payments will be adjusted against actual income figures as supplied to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

This check will result in one of the following:

- A nil result
- A positive adjustment
- A negative adjustment

* Reconciliation will be a largely automated process using income data provided by the ATO. Customers (and partners) not required to lodge Tax Returns (typically those with income under \$6,000) will be reconciled separately over a period of 10 days starting from 16 July. *

* For FTB customers who lodge Tax Returns, any positive or negative adjustment will be transmitted back to the ATO where the adjustment will be made as an addition to or subtraction from the customers Tax Assessment. Where there are insufficient funds available to cover a negative outcome, any outstanding amount will be passed back to FAO. FAO will advise customers of any outstanding amount and take normal recovery action (typically a negotiated withholding from ongoing payments). *

For FTB customers who are not required to lodge Tax Returns, positive adjustments will be paid, by FAO, direct to customer accounts while negative adjustments will follow the FAO advice/recovery process outlined above.

FTB customers who have chosen to receive FTB as a lump sum end of year payment will need to complete a supplement to Tax Pack. ATO will transmit these details to FAO where FTB entitlement will be calculated (again automatically) and returned to ATO for payment through Tax Assessment.

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FTB customers who have chosen to take FTB as a withholding from their regular tax instalments will be reconciled in a similar way. Note that any negative adjustment related to tax instalment withholdings will be a tax debt - any recovery action will be the responsibility of ATO.

CCB customers will be adjusted using the same income information supplied by ATO. In addition CCB adjustment will take into account actual childcare usage as supplied by Childcare Service providers. Since this information is provided to FAO (Childcare Payment Teams) after the end of each quarter CCB adjustments will not start until 1 October 2001. For any given customer CCB adjustment cannot take place until usage details are available from all Childcare services used by that customer during the year.

Since CCB reconciliation will be delayed, positive or negative adjustment will not be via the customer's Tax Refund. All adjustments will be managed directly by the FAO. Positive adjustments will be paid direct to a customer's nominated account while negative adjustments will be the subject of recovery action by FAO.

CCB customers who have chosen the end-of-year lump sum payment option can lodge claims with FAO from 1 July onwards. These claims cannot be processed until after 19 September and will be reconciled from 1 October onwards. The claim form will include mention of this delay and will be followed up by letter.

While the overall system will run automatically there will be instances where some manual intervention in the process is necessary - typically where a customer has been placed on a manual rate at some point in the year. Some lump sum claims may also require manual intervention.

Activities processed after reconciliation triggering a rate change for the 2000/2001 financial year, will also trigger re-reconciliations. ATO revisions to Tax Assessments will have a similar effect.

Non lodgers (customers who should but haven't lodged tax returns) will receive reminder letters on 1 April and 1 July 2002. Customers who have still not lodged by 1 October 2002 will receive debt notices.

The Demand

Attachment 1 is a timetable taken from the Reconciliation Training Support materials.

Looking at workload demand for the remainder of this year there are four major events:

3 July First possible date for FTB claims through ATO. CCB Lump Sum claims can also be lodged (but not processed) with FAO

16 July Bulk reconciliation of customers not required to lodge tax returns. This will include a high proportion of single parents

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19 September CCB Lump Sum claims can be processed. Payment cannot be made until after 1 October.

1 October CCB reconciliation starts.

The following is a 'best guess' month by month demand scenario. The scenarios are based on a number of assumptions which may not prove correct - in particular, historical ATO lodgement patterns and how quickly customers will contact following receipt of reconciliation result notification.

July. ATO automatic reconciliations will trickle in from early July onwards. By the end of July 10% of customers will have lodged Tax returns. From 16 July on bulk reconciliation of the not-required-to-lodge customers will start and be completed by end July. Around half of these will be PPS customers. *Expect general queries to rise slowly through the month and peak in the last week when queries from income support customers will predominate. Explaining maintenance reconciliation will be a major issue.*

August. ATO reconciliations continue. An additional 20% of ATO customers expected to lodge this month. This is usually the peak month for Tax Returns. *All indications suggest that August will be the peak month for reconciliation. In early August expect a continuation of queries from low income customers along with a significant increase in general queries throughout the month. Maintenance continues as a major topic.*

September. Normal lodgement pattern suggests that an additional 15% of customers will lodge in September. CCB lump sum claims processed from 16 September onwards. *Assuming that we have cleared most of the low income queries, general queries will predominate. Relative to August the query level should drop however this will depend on whether customers approach us as soon as advice of reconciliation is received. While CCB lump sums will need to be processed, payment will not start until October.*

October. An additional 15% of customers lodge this month. CCB reconciliation commences 1 October. *October appears to be another peak month. Expect a continuation of general reconciliation queries throughout the month. CCB reconciliation will probably begin to impact from the second week and accelerate as the month progresses. Overall contacts expected to increase relative to September.*

November. 10% of ATO customers expected to lodge this month. CCB reconciliation continues. *Expect a continuation of CCB reconciliation queries with a decreasing level of general queries. November appears to be the point where the query level starts to drop away however progress on CCB reconciliation (and questions) will be a major determining factor.*

December. Tax return lodgements expected to be below 10%.

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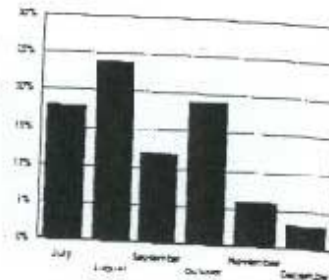
FAO Reconciliation Impact Assessment

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Assuming no significant flow on from previous months we should see a significant drop in contacts.

Late July and August appear to be the most critical periods. We should also anticipate a significant spike in October.

This bar chart combines the ATO lodgement pattern with bulk reconciliation and OCB reconciliation to build a rough picture of the month by month demand scenarios described above.



The Workload

At the CSC level the impact of reconciliation falls into three major headings:

1. Clearing activities in the lead up to reconciliation
2. Manual interventions
3. Customer contacts: explanations/reviews/appeals/debt recovery issues

Clearing Activities

Activities affecting rates (changes to qualification) for either FTB or OCB need to be cleared prior to reconciliation. Any rate affecting change done after a customer has been reconciled will result in a re-reconciliation. This in turn will require a second advice to the customer (from FAO). We can reasonably assume that a customer receiving a second notice of reconciliation will query the result.

Manual Intervention

Current estimates place the number of instances of manual intervention in the range of 20,000 to 30,000 nationally. Each instance of manual intervention will generate an MFU. MFUs will be generated overnight and will need to be cleared by 1.00pm on the following day to ensure that any adjustment is included in the customers Tax Assessment. Adjustments for any MFU not cleared by 1.00pm will become the responsibility of the FAO. While most MFUs will be relatively simple to clear some will require a level of investigation.

Given the tight timeframe for clearing MFUs there has been an 'in principle' decision to centralise this work at a national level. Finalisation of this decision will depend on details of 'who' and 'where'.

Customer Contacts

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* The overall number of customers to be reconciled is around 2 million nationally. Add to this an additional 500,000 CCB reconciliation 'events'. Since around 10% of the national FAO population our share will be around 250,000. Using this as a base figure it is fairly obvious that contact from a small percentage of customers will generate a significant workload. While we expect the bulk of contacts to come from customers with negative adjustments we can also expect questions from customers with nil or positive adjustments. *

As an indication of orders of magnitude the following table sets out the number of contacts within using a range from 5% to 25% of customers reconciled within the Area. To put this into a CSC perspective, the table includes a breakdown to CSCs with 5% and 10% of the Area population.

Number of Contacts?	12500	25,000	37,500	50,000	62500
625	1,250	1,875	2,500	3,125	
1,250	2,500	3,750	5,000	6250	

Not all of these contacts will come to CSCs. There are a number of points, apart from CSCs where questions could be resolved.

- ATO Call. Will resolve issues related to taxable income
- FAO Call. Will sort out the less complex questions. Questions requiring detailed explanations or further action will be referred to CSCs
- Debt Recovery. Will resolve simple queries related to reconciliation plus any queries related to recovery. FAO Debt Recovery may be centralised nationally.

Questions will arrive at CSCs via two channels

1. 'Drop in' traffic. While this will affect all CSCs the major impact is likely to be in the Northern Cluster. Any FAO Call Centre correction will increase drop in traffic.
2. Call backs.

While numbers are an issue, the spread of queries through time will also affect our capacity. We can anticipate a more intense level of queries in the late July/ August and October peaks.

We can expect two basic questions:

1. Why was I paid/cid I lose this amount? This may also include questions from customers with nil adjustments.
2. From customers with negative adjustments to be recovered through FAO "How can I repay"

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FAO Reconciliation Impact Assessment

Question 1 will require an initial explanation of the broad principles of estimation and reconciliation. In many cases customers may insist on the specifics related to their case. This will require investigation by "drilling down" through a series of FAO Reconciliation screens to identify (where possible) the particular period(s) or event(s) triggering a negative/positive adjustment. Note that for a given customer there may be multiple events or a single overriding event (eg. a low estimate for the year).

The time involved in explanation will vary considerably depending on the complexity of the customer's record and the attitude of the customer. A satisfactory explanation at this point will limit 'down the line' work (eg. second interviews, ODM reviews, ARO reviews, Ministerials, Ombudsman referrals). No matter how well we explain we should expect that a proportion of customers will want to progress to the next stage.

* | Expect a significant increase in ODM reviews, APO reviews, Ministerial and Ombudsman contacts. | *

Question 2 relates to recovery. At this stage we expect CSC (or Call Centre) staff will be empowered to negotiate to a straightforward withholdings regime 'on the spot' within prescribed boundaries. More complex recovery (eg. existing debts, customers who wish to pay at a rate below a prescribed minimum) will be referred on to a (probably centralised) Debt Recovery team.

Complex cases

Shared Care

Non resident partners are entitled to claim FTB for a child who is in their care for part of the year however we cannot pay more than 100% of FTB for a given child. In some cases we will get claims where the resident/non resident total exceeds 100%. Typically this will be where the resident partner is already receiving 100% FTB by instalment and the non resident partner makes a lump sum claim. In these cases the non resident claim will be initially rejected but can be reviewed on request.

The review process requires that the claims of both partners be investigated and, where necessary, justified by documentation. These cases are often difficult and time consuming. Given the nature of these cases Social Worker involvement is often needed.

Maintenance (Child Support)

Maintenance is reconciled along with income. There will be a number of issues requiring complex and difficult explanation where overpayment related to maintenance income has occurred. This includes:

- The impact of large arrears payments
- The amount maintenance customers are 'deemed' to have received vs what they actually received
- The disbursement method of calculating ongoing entitlement vs the reconciliation figure

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FAO Reconciliation Impact Assessment

21/5/01

Most maintenance contacts will come from bulk reconciliation starting on 16 July

Minimising/Managing the Impact

* Strategies for handling the impact will be required at a National, Area, Sub Area and CSC level. These strategies can be divided into six major topics *

1. Monitoring the workload
2. Eliminating work
3. Simplifying Work
4. Transferring work
5. Spreading work
6. Increasing available staff

* These options can be considered in the context of the reconciliation workload and the ongoing 'normal' FAO workload. Minimising 'normal' work will free staff up to handle reconciliation. *

1. Monitoring

* NSO will form a Command and Control Group to monitor the impact of reconciliation one a day to day basis throughout the expected peak periods. This will probably include regular phone hookups with Area representatives. Typically this group will monitor the number of negative adjustments generated along with the ongoing impact on FAO call and CSCs. *

While Call Centre impact can be monitored minute by minute we have no simple mechanism to measure CSC impact quickly. This problem is currently being looked at. Initial thinking is that we could develop a simple graded scale system to describe the status of queues in each CSC. This could be a scale from, say, 1 to 7 where 1 indicates "none or few customers queuing" and 7 indicates "queues out the door - unmanageable". This information could be transmitted daily from each CSC in a standard 'tick the box' e mail.

While this form of rating is obviously subjective to individuals and CSCs, the overall national result on a given day or over a period of time will be a strong indicator of impact. Allied with a more objective measurement, number of customer records accessed for instance, we could form a picture of CSC impact which, when related to the level of negative adjustments generated, would help to predict ongoing impacts.

Within the Area we could mirror the national approach using a group led by BM FAO and including FAO Account Manager, outposted BM(s), SIS and HRM.

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FAO Reconciliation Impact Assessment

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While the impact within a CSC will be largely self evident we could look at standard methods of quantifying (queue counts for instance?) providing this could be managed in the face of a major impact.

2. Eliminating/Preventing Work

This brings up the question of "What can we not do" in relation to the 'normal' workload. While slippage in FAO KPIs will be regarded sympathetically at a national level, the reality of customer reec means there is little we can avoid doing apart from re-examining practices within individual CSCs.

Activities completed after reconciliation, affecting 2000/20001, rates will trigger a re-reconciliation. Clearing these activities will decrease the contact level.

Customer information explaining the general principles of reconciliation may also help to minimise contacts. This is likely to be available in the form of fact sheets. It is now unlikely that there will be a media campaign dealing with estimate/reconciliation issues.

A more productive line is prevention in relation to reconciliation workload. The key lies in the quality of the explanation given to customers at first (reconciliation) contact. A good (and sympathetic) explanation may reduce the overall demand for second visits, ODM reviews, ARO reviews as well as minimising the level of Ministerials and Ombudsman requests. 'Good explanations' will depend on the interpersonal skills of CSOs combined with the quality of training and the extent to which it can be absorbed. Training will be a critical issue. The extent to which CSOs understand and can quickly access the relevant screens in the system will be a major factor. Customers may need/want printouts showing details of their reconciliation outcome. System training will be via CEN in late June.

3. Simplifying Work

Material supplied for reconciliation includes numerous job aids, task cards etc. While development will continue at both national and Area level there is some onus on CSCs and FAC Team Leaders to articulate needs as soon as they are identified. There is also a need to ensure that CSOs are aware of the range of aids already available.

4. Transferring work

This area basically covers the concept of centralisation. It is now almost definite that Manual Interventions will be centralised nationally. FAO Debt Recovery will also go to a national centre.

FACs have provided additional funding to assist with any internal initiative to handle work. The use of these funds is still under discussion. This money could be applied at the national or Area level and is open to bids and ideas. Suggestions so far include centralisation of Shared Care cases and central processing of CCB Lump Sum claims.

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FAO Reconciliation Impact Assessment

21/5/01

Within the Area or sub areas we could consider centralising aspects of reconciliation (if not done nationally) as well parts of the 'normal' workload. Our major limitations are space (the lack of) and a shortage of experienced staff. We should not underestimate the level of knowledge (particularly system) required for FAO/Families work.

5. Spreading Work (flattening the peaks)

* | Apart from bulk reconciliation of low income customers demand is largely driven by ATO lodgement patterns. While there is capacity to spread bulk lodgement it is difficult to find a spread which will reduce peaks. This is still being considered.

FAO Call will increase its capacity to handle late and early calls by adding two Call Centres () and () to its extended hours capacity. Other options being considered include: Saturday morning access, recorded bulletin boards, using non FAO queues for simple queries, specialist queues (eg. OCB), optional receipting to reduce call time and greater use of the internet.

* | Within CSCs we need to look at ways to quickly reduce/spread peaks in customer contact. This could include:

- Increasing the number of reception /interview points
- Arranging to call queuing customers (on overtime?)
- Flying squads
- Freeing experienced CSCs of some 'normal' work to allow greater front end capacity
- Saturday openings dedicated to reconciliation
- Providing generic explanations for reconciliation (written or verbal) to queuing customers
- Shuttling printouts from printer to reception/interview points to reduce the overall time per interview
- A group or seminar approach

We need to collect ideas from all sources and amalgamate into a central bank for access by all CSCs.

6. Increasing available staff

* | FAO Call staffing has increased by 400 in anticipation of reconciliation. Total numbers will be around 1400 compared with 1200 at FAO implementation. *

Debt Recovery staff (centralised or local) will be expected to answer simple queries as well as resolve recovery issues. A centralised Debt recovery facility will add around 50 staff to the overall numbers.

ATO Call are increasing staffing in anticipation.

FACS have provided some additional funds to cover centralisation initiatives.

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CSCs may need to revisit local FAO Team staffing. It may be possible to coopt non FAO staff, with basic FAO knowledge, to cover some "normal" work or assist with simple explanations.

Apart From FAO.....

Reconciliation will flow over to other parts of the CSC and Area Support Office.

- **Customer Service Managers.** Expect a major increase in customer traffic along with increased Ministerial and Ombudsman requests
- **Social Workers.** Increase in referrals with particular emphasis on shared care and maintenance
- **Indigenous Liaison Officers.** Remote indigenous communities may require special attention. We may need to supplement briefing materials sent to Community Agents.
- **Multicultural Liaison Officers.** Ethnic communities may need targeted assistance
- **Non FAO Teams.** Non FAO OMCs will be contacted by their customers on reconciliation issues. Non FAO staff will need to understand the basics.
- **ASO Indigenous Services & Rural Teams.** Possible issues for remote communities, Community Agents and rural customers in general.
- **ASO Service Integration Shop.** General assistance and support to CSCs. Expect a significant increase in complaint/Ministerial/Ombudsman traffic
- **ASO HRM.** Maintaining staff welfare and wellbeing will be an integral part of coping with reconciliation
- **AFO.** Expect significant increase in appeals. As part of the DSN, AROs can make a significant contribution to the standard and consistency of technical decision making with particular emphasis on CDM reviews.

Where to from here.....

While this document sets out some broad strategies for reconciliation we now need to involve all stakeholders within the Area in the development of detailed strategies to implement and cope with reconciliation.

* We need to develop options at the Area, sub Area, CSC and FAO Team level. We also need to ensure that individual CSCs are prepared. The standard of training, its timing and the extent to which individual CSCs cope with the training load will be critical. *

21 May 2001

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• no reconciliation Impact Assessment

21/5/01

Attachment 1

FTB/CCB Reconciliation Timetable

16 June 2001	System Release - Phase 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTB Tax Delivery Claims • FTB Reconciliation • 2001/02 income Reassessments and letters
3 July 2001	ATO customers will be able to claim FTB via ATO. Data is sent to Centrelink for processing and result is returned to ATO for inclusion on tax Notice of Assessment
16th July 2001	FTB Reconciliation commences. FTB customers not required to lodge tax returns will be reconciled automatically by Centrelink. That is single customers in receipt of income support for the whole financial year and customers (and partners) where all taxable income estimates are under \$6,000.
September 2001	System Release <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCB Lump Sum Claims • CCB Reconciliation
1 October 2001	CCB Reconciliation commences
31st October 2001	Individuals (not on Tax Agent lodgement program) expected to lodge Income Tax Return (ITR).
1 November 2001	If customer's FTB and/or CCB reconciliation is held pending ex-pts ITR, customer's FTB and/or CCB will be reconciled using ex-partner's estimate. (Interim Reconciliation)
31 March 2002	All individuals expected to lodge ITR
01st April 2002	If actual ATI not received by this date from ATO - customer will be sent a letter regarding non-lodgement of tax return and consequences for FTB and CCB.

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1 July 2002	If actual ATI has not been received from ATC as at 30 June 2002 - customer will be advised of intention to raise: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An FTB debt for the total amount of FTB received by the customer during the relevant income year.• A CCB debt for the difference between the amount paid and the minimum rate payable.
1 October 2002	Debts will be raised where actual ATI is not available.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 8

Topic: Family Tax Benefit/Child Care Benefit

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) With reference to the notice(s) informing families of their Overpayments and Debts could:
 - a) copies of draft notices forwarded to the Minister for Community Services' Office for approval in late September be provided to the Committee; and
 - b) the subsequent notice(s) approved following market research in late November please be provided to the committee?
- b) In what way will debts recovered through the reconciliation of Family Tax Benefit / Child Care Benefit be recorded in the Budget papers? Will the debts be offset against outlays on Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit in the year that they are received?
- c) Is the outcome of future years' reconciliations already factored into the forward estimates? If so to what extent are negative and positive adjustments for each of the relevant payments reflected in each year of the forward estimates?
- d) If the outcome of the reconciliations is not already factored into the forward estimates is it true that net negative adjustments would be a windfall to the budget bottom line?

Answer:

- a) Copies of the letters are attached.

a) Letters pre market research

Attachment 1 - Overpayment letter < \$1000, no repayment due.

Attachment 2 - Re-reconciliation (FRR) > \$1000 - No previous payments made
Repayments due - Not on pay.

Attachment 3 - Overpayment > \$1049 Repayments due – Gets FTB

b) Letters post market research

Attachment 4 – Overpayment letter < \$1000

Attachment 5 - Overpayment letter > \$1000

- b) As with other Departmental Special Appropriations that form part of administered expenses, advances, arrears payments, top up payments and recoveries received are treated in the same way. They are recorded in the year in which they are received.
- c) As with other Departmental Special Appropriations, future year estimates are customarily calculated on the basis of the estimated average number of customers over the financial year multiplied by the estimated average rates of annual payment for those customers. While a wide range of factors affect the average rates over time, including income estimation behaviour, the age profile of children, the proportion of single income families and childcare usage, as well as advances, arrears payments, top up payments and overpayment recoveries, these are not maintained as separate components in the estimate figures. The estimates

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derived from customer numbers and average rates are produced as single aggregate figures, and are expected to continue to rise for the forward estimates period.

- d) not applicable

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Lmb 86 Darwin NT 0801

Reference: 111 222 333X



FTB6 – Overpayment < \$1000
No repayments due

2 July 2001

About your Family Tax Benefit – 2000/01

The first year of the Family Tax Benefit has shown that some Australian families have incorrectly estimated their income or had changes to their family circumstances. This means that some families have been paid an excess amount of Family Tax Benefit.

To assist families adjust to the new system, the Government has decided that, for the 2000-01 financial year only, families do not have to repay the first \$1000 of some Family Tax Benefit overpayments related to incorrect estimates of income or shared care or the first \$1000 of some Child Care Benefit overpayments.

How your Family Tax Benefit was assessed

We have checked your estimated income against your actual income. Your family income for 2000/01 was \$60,000. Based on this income and your family circumstances during that year, you received more Family Tax Benefit than you were entitled to.

As the amount of your excess payment is below the waiver amount allowed, you do not have to repay any money.

Details of amount payable for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001

Received	\$2700.00
Entitled	\$2300.00
Total excess payment	\$400.00
Less waiver amount	\$400.00

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Amount payable

\$NIL

Important

To avoid being overpaid in future, it is important that you ensure the estimate of your income and other information you have given the Family Assistance Office about your circumstances is correct. You can now update your income estimate by visiting our website at www.familyassist.gov.au.

Your reference number is 111 222 333X

Your Rights

If you do not agree with this decision, please contact the Family Assistance Office on 13 6150*. We will reconsider your case and change the decision if appropriate. If you still do not agree, you can ask for an Authorised Review Officer (ARO) to look at it. The ARO is an experienced officer who would not have previously been involved in your case. They can change the decision if it's wrong or, if they agree with the decision they can tell you how to appeal to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT). Both the ARO review and the SSAT appeal are free.

Privacy

If you have concerns about your personal information call 13 6150* or visit your nearest Family Assistance Office. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Privacy Commissioner on the 1300 number listed in your phone book. Personal information is treated as protected and can only be released to someone else in special circumstances, where the law requires, or where you give permission.

Customer Relations

If you wish to comment on the quality of service you received call Freecall 1800 050 004*. If your concern has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you can take the matter up with the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office on the 1300 number listed in your phone book.

Languages other than English

For more information in languages other than English call 13 1202* between 8am and 5pm (Eastern Standard Time) Monday to Friday.

*Calls to 13 and 1800 numbers are local call cost. Calls made from mobiles are charged at mobile phone rates.

Please read the back of this letter



If you have any questions about this letter please ring: **13 6150**



Callcentre Hours:
Monday — Friday 8.00 am — 8.00 pm



Use **Billpay** to pay by phone on **13 1816** or via the internet at www.postbillpay.com.au

Billpay code: 0802
Ref: 111 222 333 02

or **pay in person** over the counter at any post office. (*Cash, cheques, credit or debit cards accepted.*)

To arrange **automatic deductions** from your financial institution account, call **13 xxxx**.



Payment Slip



*802 111222333 X C O
Mr FTB Reconciliation Debts with FTIT Option 1



Post this payment slip with your cheque or money order made out to the "Collector of Public Money, Centrelink" to the address at the top of this letter.

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Lmb 86 Darwin NT 0801

Reference: 111 222 333X



FTB8 - Re-reconciliation (FRR)
> \$1000 - No previous payments made
Repayments due - Not on pay

2 July 2001

About your Family Tax Benefit – 2000/01

This letter replaces any previous entitlement letters you have received "About your Family Tax Benefit – 2000/01"

The first year of the Family Tax Benefit has shown that some Australian families have incorrectly estimated their income or had changes to their family circumstances. This means that some families have been paid an excess amount of Family Tax Benefit.

To assist families adjust to the new system, the Government has decided that, for the 2000/01 financial year only, families do not have to repay the first \$1000 of some Family Tax Benefit overpayments related to incorrect estimates of income or shared care or the first \$1000 of some Child Care Benefit overpayments.

How your Family Tax Benefit was assessed

Your Family Tax Benefit for the 2000/01 financial year has been reviewed. As a result, the amount of Family Tax Benefit you received is more than the amount you were entitled to.

The back of this letter details the range of flexible repayment options available to assist families.

Please read the back of this letter



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Details of amount payable for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001

Received	\$3700.00
Entitled	\$1300.00
Total excess payment	\$2400.00
Less waiver amount	\$1000.00
Amount payable	\$1400.00
Due date	30 July 2001

Important

To avoid being overpaid in future, it is important that you ensure the estimate of your income and other information you have given the Family Assistance Office about your circumstances is correct. You can now update your income estimate by visiting our website at www.familyassist.gov.au.

Your reference number is 111 222 333X

Payment Options

Centrelink manages Family Assistance Office repayments. You can pay the amount payable in full by the due date or make arrangements to pay over time.

- **If you choose to pay the amount in full by the due date:** please use the payment slip on the front of this letter to make your payment by phone, internet, mail or in person at any post office outlet.
- **If you would prefer to pay the amount in this letter over time:** please call Centrelink on 1800 655 467 {Mock-up note: This is the local Area Recovery Team} before the due date so that they can help you with payment options.
- **To arrange other repayment options:** call Centrelink on 1800 655 467 {Mock-up note: This is the local Area Recovery Team}.

Your Rights

If you do not agree with this decision, please contact the Family Assistance Office on 13 6150*. We will reconsider your case and change the decision if appropriate. If you still do not agree, you can ask for an Authorised Review Officer (ARO) to look at it. The ARO is an experienced officer who would not have previously been involved in your case. They can change the decision if it's wrong or, if they agree with the decision they can tell you how to appeal to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT). Both the ARO review and the SSAT appeal are free.

Privacy

If you have concerns about your personal information call 13 6150* or visit your nearest Family Assistance Office. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Privacy Commissioner on the 1300 number listed in your phone book. Personal information is treated as protected and can only be released to someone else in special circumstances, where the law requires, or where you give permission.

Customer Relations

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If you wish to comment on the quality of service you received call Freecall 1800 050 004*. If your concern has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you can take the matter up with the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office on the 1300 number listed in your phone book.

Languages other than English

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Lmb 86 Darwin NT 0801

Reference: 111 222 333X



FTB9 - Overpayment > \$1049
Repayments due – Gets FTB

2 July 2001

About your Family Tax Benefit – 2000/01

The first year of the Family Tax Benefit has shown that some Australian families have incorrectly estimated their income or had changes to their family circumstances. This means that some families have been paid an excess amount of Family Tax Benefit.

To assist families adjust to the new system, the Government has decided that, for the 2000/01 financial year only, families do not have to repay the first \$1000 of some Family Tax Benefit overpayments related to incorrect estimates of income or shared care or the first \$1000 of some Child Care Benefit overpayments.

How your Family Tax Benefit was assessed

We have checked your estimated income against your actual income. Your family income for 2000/01 was \$60,000. Based on this income and your family circumstances during that year, you received more Family Tax Benefit than you were entitled to.

The back of this letter details the range of flexible repayment options available to assist families.

Details of amount payable for the period 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001

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Total excess payment	\$1400.00
Less waiver amount	\$1000.00
Amount payable	\$400.00
Due Date	30 July 2001

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- **If you choose to pay the amount in full by the due date:** please use the payment slip on the front of this letter to make your payment by phone, internet, mail or in person at any post office outlet.
- **Deductions from Family Assistance Office or Centrelink payments:** if you choose to pay over time and are receiving Family Assistance Office or Centrelink payments, you do not have to do anything. Centrelink will arrange deductions of \$20 per fortnight from your Family Tax Benefit payments after the due date. You will not be able to get advance payments of Family Tax Benefit until the amount owing is fully repaid. Centrelink may contact you again to talk about whether you would like to repay the amount owing more quickly. If you ever need to change the amount being deducted from your payments, please contact Centrelink on 1800 655 467 {Mock-up note: This is the local Area Recovery Team}.
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Output Group: 1.1

Question No:10

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard Page: CA139

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

Can you liaise with the ATO to produce a table that shows the reduction of FTB through the tax side? Is that possible?

Answer:

It was expected following the "Survey of Customer Delivery Preferences for Family Tax Benefit and Childcare" by the Marketing Science Centre, University of South Australia that up to 20% of customers could claim Family Tax Benefit through the tax system. While not all tax claims have yet been received, processing to date suggests that the proportion of customers receiving lump sum payments or reduced tax withholdings through the tax system will be less than 10%.

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Output Group:1.1

Question No: 11

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard Page: CA139

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

Can you please provide the Committee with a copy of the survey of customer intentions?

Answer:

Copy of the "Survey of Customer Delivery Preferences for Family Tax Benefit and Childcare" by the Marketing Science Centre, University of South Australia dated 20 March 2000 is provided for the Committee's information.

[Note: attachments have not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 12

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard Page: CA152, 153, 154

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) What is the total number of families that claimed FTB (parts A & B) in 2000-01;
- b) How many got paid fortnightly;
- c) How many chose to get paid through the ATO as either a lump sum, or tax instalment reductions;
- d) Do you have a total dollar value of the Family Tax Benefit payments claimed through the respective payment methods?
- e) Please provide the distribution of FTB top-ups in \$100 bands

Answer

a) and b) Centrelink records show that 1,937,047 customers successfully claimed Family Tax Benefit Part A and 1,358,413 customers successfully claimed Family Tax Benefit Part B as fortnightly payments.

c) Australian Taxation Office records show that 67,496 customers have so far been paid Family Tax Benefit as a lump sum through the Taxation Office. The Taxation Office estimates that around 3,000 customers receive Family Tax Benefit as reduced tax withholdings.

d) As indicated at the Estimates Hearings (CA 153) the additional estimates include \$10.722 billion in fortnightly payments by Centrelink. A further \$0.350 billion is expected to be expended by the Australian Taxation Office.

e)

Top-ups	Customers	Top-ups	Customers	Top-ups	Customers
1 - 100	44,068	3401 - 3500	495	6801 - 6900	45
101 - 200	23,313	3501 - 3600	549	6901 - 7000	72
201 - 300	17,309	3601 - 3700	419	7001 - 7100	53
301 - 400	13,897	3701 - 3800	418	7101 - 7200	32
401 - 500	11,523	3801 - 3900	458	7201 - 7300	36
501 - 600	10,005	3901 - 4000	390	7301 - 7400	29
601 - 700	8,449	4001 - 4100	349	7401 - 7500	24
701 - 800	7,365	4101 - 4200	602	7501 - 7600	38
801 - 900	6,410	4201 - 4300	313	7601 - 7700	20
901 - 1000	6,033	4301 - 4400	248	7701 - 7800	23
1001 - 1100	5,299	4401 - 4500	246	7801 - 7900	20
1101 - 1200	4,490	4501 - 4600	248	7901 - 8000	41

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1201 - 1300	3,991	4601 - 4700	372	8001 - 8100	14
1301 - 1400	3,612	4701 - 4800	233	8101 - 8200	25
1401 - 1500	3,158	4801 - 4900	184	8201 - 8300	33
1501 - 1600	2,829	4901 - 5000	257	8301 - 8400	23
1601 - 1700	2,805	5001 - 5100	173	8401 - 8500	18
1701 - 1800	2,608	5101 - 5200	163	8501 - 8600	19
1801 - 1900	3,724	5201 - 5300	152	8601 - 8700	14
1901 - 2000	2,039	5301 - 5400	141	8701 - 8800	40
2001 - 2100	2,292	5401 - 5500	153	8801 - 8900	7
2101 - 2200	1,478	5501 - 5600	117	8901 - 9000	9
2201 - 2300	1,429	5601 - 5700	131	9001 - 9100	10
2301 - 2400	1,331	5701 - 5800	113	9101 - 9200	4
2401 - 2500	1,202	5801 - 5900	91	9201 - 9300	8
2501 - 2600	1,284	5901 - 6000	152	9301 - 9400	4
2601 - 2700	1,612	6001 - 6100	98	9401 - 9500	2
2701 - 2800	916	6101 - 6200	185	9501 - 9600	13
2801 - 2900	1,071	6201 - 6300	80	9601 - 9700	7
2901 - 3000	776	6301 - 6400	80	9701 - 9800	3
3001 - 3100	620	6401 - 6500	73	9801 - 9900	4
3101 - 3200	595	6501 - 6600	97	9901 - 10000	4
3201 - 3300	550	6601 - 6700	76	10000 - PLUS	52
3301 - 3400	574	6701 - 6800	153	TOTAL	207,412

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance
Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Question No: 49

Hansard Page: CA213

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

Has the Department been asked to provide any information on the effectiveness or impact of the first child tax bonus scheme, when that request was made and when the information was supplied to the person or department that requested it ?

Answer:

No such request has been made.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 13

Topic: Family Tax Benefit Overpayments

Hansard Page: CA157

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide the distribution of FTB overpayments in \$100 bands

Answer:

The information requested is only available in the format given below. It is a point in time extract as at 11 January 2002.

AMOUNT OF OVERPAYMENT	Customers	AMOUNT OF OVERPAYMENT	Customers
\$0 - \$49.99	73,234	\$1300.01 - \$1400.00	9,889
\$50.00 - \$99.99	45,206	\$1400.01 - \$1500.00	8,498
\$100.00 - \$199.99	59,411	\$1500.01 - \$1600.00	8,134
\$200.00 - \$299.99	42,451	\$1600.01 - \$1700.00	7,152
\$300.00 - \$399.99	33,963	\$1700.01 - \$1800.00	6,710
\$400.00 - \$499.99	29,009	\$1800.01 - \$1900.00	6,896
\$500.00 - \$599.99	24,995	\$1900.01 - \$2000.00	10,674
\$600.00 - \$699.99	21,934	\$2000.01 - \$2500.00	18,986
\$700.00 - \$799.99	19,914	\$2500.01 - \$3000.00	13,189
\$800.00 - \$899.99	17,344	\$3000.01 - \$3500.00	6,283
\$900.00 - \$1000.00	21,397	\$3500.01 - \$4000.00	4,276
\$1000.00 - \$1049.99	6,929	\$4000.01 - \$4500.00	3,053
\$1050.00 - \$1100.00	6,614	\$4500.01 - \$5000.00	1,905
\$1100.01 - \$1200.00	12,208	OVER \$5000.01	3,970
\$1200.01 - \$1300.00	10,700	Total	534,924

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 66

Topic: Family Tax Benefit Reconciliation

Hansard Page: CA 173

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) When was the national strategy document substantively signed off and sent to area managers?
- b) How many people went on line and for how long?

Answer:

- a) At a National Conference with area representatives in May 2002 a variety of information, both in written and verbal form was disseminated, from which Areas produced local documents according to their specific requirements.
- b) The actual number of staff in the Families queue who were put on between April and July was 363. Of these 216 were temporary and 147 were permanent.

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support

Question No: 14

Topic: Youth Allowance Review - Final Report

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

Please provide the following information:

- a) Copy of final report of the Youth Allowance Review
- b) When was the Final Report submitted to the Minister
- c) When will the Final Report be released to the public?
- d) What are the recommendations and conclusions drawn from this final report?
- e) When Centrelink issues a breach notice, does it advise the recipient of the specific activity?
- f) Has the Department investigated what it would cost the Commonwealth to provide this information on breach letters?
- g) Have there been problems this year with computer glitches in Centrelink incorrectly suspending payments to University students?
- h) In which payments have these glitches occurred (e.g. Youth Allowance, AUSTUDY)
- i) Why have these glitches occurred?
- j) Are these glitches only in cases where students have transferred from one course to another?

Answers:

- a) The Final Report of the Youth Allowance Evaluation is not yet available as a public document. A copy will be provided when the Minister clears the Report for public release.
- b) The Final Report was submitted to the Minister on 21st December 2001.
- c) It is anticipated that the Final Report will be released shortly.
- d) The Final Report does not include recommendations. A copy will be provided when cleared for public release by Minister Anthony. The findings from the evaluation are extremely positive.
- e) The breach notice advises the job seeker of the requirement that they are in breach of - eg failed to notify of a change in circumstance.
- f) No
- g) No computer glitches have been identified which have resulted in the incorrect suspension of Centrelink payments to University students
- h) None
- i) Not applicable
- j) Not applicable

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Output Group: 1.2 – Youth and Student Support

Question No: 15

Topic: Youth and Drugs

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) What Commonwealth funding goes to programs that support young people with drug related health issues?
- b) Where are the programs located?
- c) Who runs them?
- d) Are there any residential programs for drug affected young people that are supported by the Commonwealth?
- e) Where are the programs located?
- f) Who runs them?

Answer:

- a) - f) The Department of Family and Community Services (under Output Group 1.2) is responsible for the ‘*Strengthening and Supporting Families Coping With Illicit Drug Use*’ measure of the National Illicit Drug Strategy.

This measure provides \$11.3 million over four years to State and Territory Governments to develop programs to assist communities and community organisations provide support services for families with young persons affected by illicit drug use. A list of State based initiatives is at **Attachment A**.

The Department of Health and Aging is responsible for programs supporting young people with drug related health issues.

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support

Question No: 16

Topic: Youth Pathways Report

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) What action has the Department taken on the recommendations of the Youth Pathways report?
- b) Has the Department allocated any funding from the Additional Estimates appropriations towards addressing the recommendations of the Youth Pathways report?
- c) In May 2001, the Department advised that many of the Report's recommendations required cooperation and collaboration with other Departments and State Governments. Can the Department give the committee an update on the developments in this area. In particular, has the framework of the consultative process required been developed yet?
- d) In line with one of the key recommendations of the report, does the Department expect there to be any changes to the role of the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation? If so, what are they?

Answers:

- a) The Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) is developing two initiatives, namely the Mentor Marketplace and the Transition to Independent Living Allowance. These two initiatives are part of the Government's commitment to spend \$197.6 million over 4 years in response to the *Footprints to the Future* Report, as announced in the 2001-02 Budget.
- b) No
- c) At the Commonwealth level, the Government established the Secretaries' Advisory Group on Youth which draws together Secretaries from key Commonwealth departments to discuss issues around joint youth servicing and to develop strategies for working collaboratively. To date, this Group has met twice and is due to meet again soon. It has established a number of working groups to oversee the development of responses to recommendations from the *Footprints to the Future* Report.

With regard to Commonwealth-State/Territory level consultations, the framework for these is being developed at Ministerial level through the Community Services Ministers' Conference (CSMC) and the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) Subcommittee on Young People's Transitions. These committees are discussing how to further develop collaborative partnerships between the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments in terms of addressing youth issues.

- CSMC established the Youth Working Group to advise on the development of TILA, among other issues.

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Within the States and Territories, FaCS staff have been involved in developing and participating in local networks and forums to better coordinate youth servicing. Membership of these local level networks can include State and Local Government representatives, community organisations, youth peak bodies, young people, education and training providers, as well as the FaCS representatives. Many of these networks are now seeking ways to progress the ideas and recommendations presented in the *Footprints to the Future* Report.

- d) This issue falls within the portfolio of the Department of Education, Science and Training.

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support

Question No: 17

Topic: Youth Pathways- Transition to Independent Living Allowance

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) At what stage is the development of the TILA payment at?
- b) What groups/organisations is the Department consulting with about the TILA payment?
- c) What is the format for these consultations (submissions, discussions etc)?
- d) Is the Department proposing that there will be direct payments to the individuals leaving state-supported care, or to the service providers that they use in a voucher type system?

Answers:

a) The Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CSMAC) Youth Working Group (YWG) was established in August 2001 to guide the future development of the Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) which will be implemented in March 2003. Officials from all States and Territories are represented in this YWG.

b) The Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) currently works in close cooperation with a number of stakeholders. Apart from other Commonwealth departments and agencies, FaCS is working closely with a number of State/Territory Governments including the New South Wales Department of Community Services, Queensland Department of Community Services, Western Australian Department for Community Development, Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services, Northern Territory Health Services, South Australian Department of Human Services, Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Community Services and the Victorian Office for Youth.

Views from a number of non- government organisations will also be sought, for example through the Youth Advisory and Consultative Forum (YACF). It is intended that future consultation strategies would include further consultations with the non-government sector.

c) Consultations with States/ Territories Governments are progressed through the YWG meetings as mentioned above.

d) Options on how TILA will be paid are currently being developed by the CSMAC YWG.

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Output Group: Youth and Student Support

Question No: 18

Topic: National Youth Roundtable

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a. When will the successful applicants to the Youth Roundtable for 2002 be announced?
- b. What recommendations has the Youth Roundtable made to the Government from previous years?
- c. What action has the Government taken as a result of these recommendations?
- d. What structural changes will there be to the Youth Roundtable this year, as opposed to last year?
- e. Can the Department provide a breakdown of the expenditure for 2000-01 and estimated expenditure for 2001-02 under the Voices of Youth (national youth round table, youth parliaments, science forum etc).
- f. Can the Department provide a breakdown into line items of the costs associated with the National Youth Roundtable for 2001.
- g. On what other bodies & committees did members of the Youth Roundtable serve by virtue of their membership of the National Youth Roundtable.

Answer:

- a. The successful applicants to the National Youth Roundtable 2002 were announced on 25 February 2002 by the Hon Larry Anthony, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The biographies of the successful Roundtable 2002 members are available on *the source* website at www.thesource.gov.au.
- b. The previous three National Youth Roundtables have made hundreds of recommendations to Governments at all levels. Reports and recommendations can be found on *the source* website at www.thesource.gov.au.
- c. From the three previous National Youth Roundtables, the Government has implemented a number of initiatives. These include

National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group (NIYLG)

Members: Ashley Couzens (1999) and Tim Goodwin (2000).

Recommendation: The formation of a consultative forum for young Indigenous people.

Action: Dr Kemp announced at the conclusion of Roundtable 2000 that such a forum would be established. The first meeting of the National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group was held in July 2001.

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National Code of Good Practice in New Apprenticeships

Member: Emanuel Siriotis (2000)

Recommendation: The development of a Code of Conduct to ensure young apprentices are able to work in an environment free of harassment and are afforded their proper conditions and entitlements.

Action: A Code of Good Practice has been developed for Apprentices and their employees to ensure that apprenticeships are undertaken in circumstances that develop and protect young people. The Code has been available from New Apprenticeships Centres since February 2001.

Boards and Committees

Member: Michael Zorbas (1999).

Recommendation: That young people's significant contribution in all walks of life is not overlooked.

Action: The Youth Bureau has developed a database where young people can nominate themselves for consideration by organisations for their boards and committees. Application forms can be accessed through *the source* on the Internet, www.thesource.gov.au. The Youth Bureau encourages organisations to include young people on public boards, taskforces and committees. Nominations on the database are matched up with requests from organisations.

Directory of Youth Organisations

Member: Alison Hardacre (1999).

Recommendation: That more young people be kept informed through the availability of information in a 'one stop shop'.

Action: A directory of organisations working with young people and youth groups has been incorporated into the Federal Government's youth website, *the source*. Individuals and organisations can search for and identify organisations that might be of interest to them.

Youth.Comm

Action: Youth.Comm, an email discussion list that encourages subscribers to engage in discussion of youth issues, has been established to provide feedback to the Government and enable the Government to provide information about youth issues directly and promptly to interested subscribers.

Youth Pathways Action plan

Action: Seven Roundtable members were appointed as members of this Taskforce advising the government on the Youth Pathways Action Plan. The Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce conducted workshops at the April meeting of the National Youth Roundtable 2000 to allow input into the final recommendations. National Youth Roundtable members' recommendations were adopted into the final report.

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Local Government Youth category awards

Member: Ben Kilsby (1999)

Recommendation: That the achievements of young people be better recognised by their communities by including a youth category in the National Awards for Innovation and Recognition in Local Government.

Action: The Department of Transport and Regional Services has incorporated two youth categories, metropolitan and regional, in the year 2000 National Awards for Innovation in Local Government.

The Australian Forum of Youth Organisations (AFOYO)

Member: Ben Playle (1999)

Recommendation: That youth organisations have a representative structure and direct access to Government to present concrete recommendations to Government based on youth feedback.

Action: The Department of Education, Science and Training established the Australian Forum of Youth Organisations to complement the National Youth Roundtable and provide youth organisations with the opportunity for direct input to the Government to progress key policy objectives and to raise issues based on their vast experience with young Australians.

Greater participation in volunteerism.

Member: Liam Miller (2001)

Recommendation: That greater participation by young people in volunteerism be encouraged.

Action: The Government responded by saying that the Enterprise and Career Foundation (ECECF) was established to help students at school to acquire career knowledge and also to encourage links between schools, businesses and communities. The ECECF, has been asked, where possible, to link volunteer work with a Structured Workplace Learning programme.

Support for young Indigenous people.

Member: Yin Paradies (2001)

Recommendation: Development of a programme that seeks to provide leadership, life skills and support self esteem, particularly for young Indigenous people.

Action: Then Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp, said he would promote the participation of Indigenous youth in mainstream programmes. Ausyouth, which coordinates and supports youth development activities, will be asked to work with youth organisations; and ATSIC and Indigenous young people to identify the best ways of meeting the development needs of Indigenous youth. In addition, Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Amanda Vanstone, has asked her Department and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, to work with Yin to develop his ideas.

Encouragement for young Indigenous Australians to pursue health careers.

Member: Kiarna Adams (2001)

Recommendation: That a careers booklet be produced to encourage Indigenous young people to pursue careers in the health field.

Action: The Department of Education, Science and Training is supporting this proposal by funding the production and wide distribution of the booklet she has prepared.

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Literacy and Numeracy Issues for Young Australians.

Member: Fionna Lawson (2001)

Recommendation: Increased mentor support for young people experiencing difficulties with literacy and numeracy.

Action: The Department of Education, Science and Training is looking to include mentoring into the new guidelines for the New Apprenticeships Access Programme, which assists young people to obtain the skills they need for apprenticeships and jobs.

Bullying in schools.

Member: Nicole Turner (2001)

Recommendation: That mentoring and peer support be encouraged to combat bullying in schools.

Action: The Department of Education, Science and Training have been asked to empower young people to find positive strategies by investigating and reporting on the most effective ways of getting youth input into school leadership, governance mechanisms and curriculum.

School Engagement

Member: Adam Cooper (2001)

Recommendation: To formulate a more relevant and interesting curriculum, which is more effectively related to students' lives and interests.

Action: The Department of Education, Science and Training will be investigating and reporting on best practice in student engagement in schools.

- d. There will be no structural changes to the Roundtable this year. Roundtable members will attend a training workshop and two formal meetings in Canberra. Reserves will not attend the members' training workshop as they have in previous years.
- e. A breakdown of the expenditure for 2000-01 and estimated expenditure for 2001-02 under the Voices of Youth (national youth round table, youth parliaments, science forum etc) is at Attachment A.
- f. This Information is currently unavailable
- g. See below:

2001

Member	Achievement
Sarah Meredith	* Selected to participate on Centrelink's National Student Services Partnership Group * Won the City of Casey Young Citizen of the Year 2002 * Selected as a mentor for the National Youth Roundtable 2002
Ken Edwards	* Attended and spoke at Youth Taskforce meeting on the Gold Coast
Liam Miller	* Attended and spoke at Youth Taskforce meeting on the Gold Coast

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Kim Hodder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * key note speaker on Youth Participation at the YAPA State Conference in 2001 * co-convened YouthVote 2001 - a conference for young people in Western Sydney about voting
Meagan Kerr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Selected as a member for the National Youth Council with Scouts Australia
Kiarna Adams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Selected to participate in Nursing Education Review reference group * Selected as a committee member for the National Advisory Committee for School Drug Education
Liam Hunt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Member of the National Career Information System Quality Assurance Sub-Committee * Community Service award from the ACT Government * ACT United Nations Youth Association Executive Committee * Participated in the United Nations Youth Conference 2001 * Member of the 2002 judging panel for the Youth Media Awards
Nicki Haig	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Member of Ausyouth National Advisory Committee
Kai Shanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Chosen as a participant for the WA Drug Summit held in August 2001
Adam Dean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Member of the Cairns Youth Action Committee * Participated in the Public Service Employer of Choice Workshop run by the Queensland Government
Anita Hancock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Participated in a Youth Participation Forum with Onkaparinga Council. * Participated in the Willunga Youth Forum * Participated in the second National Youth Development Conference. * Addressed the Southern Youth Networkers Meeting
Bickkie Nguyen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Selected as a delegate for the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2001 * Selected as a facilitator for the Centenary of Federation National Youth Conference of Young People held in Perth * Guest Speaker at the Rotary Club about Youth Participation in Democracy and the Community * Guest Speaker at The Western Young People's Independent Network for Human Rights Day representing the Vietnamese Community in Victoria * Selected as a mentor for the National Youth Roundtable 2002
Dwaine Joanknecht	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Member of the selection committee for the ACT Community Mentoring Programme * Selected as a delegate of the Commonwealth Youth Forum * Participated in the Taste of Industry Programme run by the ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry * Spoke about the Roundtable at the Australian Rostrum Public Speaking Competition Final and assisted in presenting awards
Naomi Howard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Participated in the Tasmanian Youth Consultative Committee * Spoke at the Ulverstone opening of The Commonwealth Bank National Coat Day
Brett Mason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Invited to provide input for a package being produced by NSW State Government, Westmead Children's Hospital and various health organisations to represent the needs of students parents and teachers in the area of backpack use
Adam Cooper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Selected as a delegate for the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2001 * Spoke at the Australian Forum of Youth Organisations
Louise Michaels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Selected as a delegate for the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2001 * Spoke at the Australian Forum of Youth Organisations
Paula Fong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Selected as a delegate for the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2001
Will Rayner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Member of the National Youth Roundtable 2002 independent selection panel
Chris Tejcek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Member of the Regional Health Service Planning Management Group * Member of the steering committee for the Regional And Rural Health Service * Chairperson of the Hastings Council Youth Advisory Council * Won the Hastings Rotary Youth Award in 2001 * Selected as a mentor for the National Youth Roundtable 2002

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Ross Duncan	* Youth representative on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Child and Youth Health Information Advisory Group
Yin Paradies	* Youth representative on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Child and Youth Health Information Advisory Group
Belinda Blake	* Executive member of GAMECON Vic, game management council of Victoria
Heather Hutchinson	* Awarded Young Citizen of the Year for the Shire of Yarra Ranges * Selected as a member of the Youth Reference Group for the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.
James Moody	* Member of the International Space Advisory Group advising the PMSEIC (Prime Ministers Science Engineering and Innovation Council) * Founded the International Young Professionals Foundation * Won the Cleaner Cities Award for Wollongong * Organised the Pacific Youth Caucus on the Environment * Participated at the World Youth Forum for the UN System in Dakar * Young Australian of the Year for Science and Technology 2002 * Chosen on the International Scientific and Technological Community delegation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development
Ehsan Fallahi	* Member of the 2002 judging panel for the Youth Media Awards
Nicole Turner	* Member of the 2002 judging panel for the Youth Media Awards * Won Singleton's Young Citizen of the Year award for 2002
Tim Quadrio	* Selected as a mentor for the National Youth Roundtable 2002

2000

Member	Achievement
Jayne Stinson	* Selected to speak on 'Young People And The Issues They Face' at the St James Ethics Centres Annual Conference in Sydney in 2000 * Nominated for Young Australian of the Year * Committee member: Dept of Health intersectorial approaches to Adolescent Health * Represented Australia at the World Health Organisation international meeting on Women in Health in Canberra in 2001 * Short term work as a media advisor with Senator Stott Despoja
Simone Donoghue	* Nominated as Australia's representative at the Commonwealth Parliament Association's Millennium Youth Parliament which meets on 22 November 2000 in London * Representative on the Queensland State Youth Council
Lana Ruvinsky	* Participated at the Youth Constitution Forum 2000 at Old Parliament House in 2000
Sam Einfeld	* Member on the Department of Industry, Science & Resources, high level committee * Participated at the Youth Constitution Forum 2000 at Old Parliament House on 17 – 18 August 2000 * Participated in the filming of a Film Australia video for the Visions Theatre of the National Museum of Australia. The program explores how young people see the future and contrasts with these visions against the visions of earlier generations
Daniel Hyden	* Nominated for Young Australian of the Year
Steve Pitcher	* Board Member of the South Australian Schizophrenia Fellowship

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	* Member of the Co-morbidity (Mental Health and Drug Issues) Roundtable
Luke Ritchie	* Board member of The Active Australia Schools Network * Member of the National Strategic Grants Committee for the Foundation of Young Australians. * Wrote a paper for the Commonwealth Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs * Attended the Commonwealth Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs * Provided input into the Department of Health and Aged Care's draft national Alcohol Plan * Selected as a delegate of the Commonwealth Youth Forum
Norvan Vogt	* Selected as a member of Ausyouth * Sponsored by International Youth Foundation to attend an International Volunteering Conference in Amsterdam
Karen Violante	* Member of The National Careers Taskforce * Invited to participate at the ANTA (Australian National Training Authority) National Conference
Fiona Clyne	* Spoke on The Rural Youth Experience at The Rural Youth Information Service Conference in Canberra * Presentation at The Workplace Conference * Presented a paper at Victoria University Conference New Democracies in Youth, Education and Community
Daniel Clarke	* Panel member at The Training and Youth Officer Conference * Presentation at The Workplace Conference
Rebecca Minty	* Panel member at The Training and Youth Officer Conference * Participated at the Youth Constitution Forum 2000 at Old Parliament House in 2000
Ryan Walker	* Invited to participate at the ANTA (Australian National Training Authority) National Conference * Appointed to the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTIF) * Director of the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP) * Member of the marketing steering committee (ECEP)
Cara White	* Invited to participate at the ANTA (Australian National Training Authority) National Conference * Selected to participate as a member of the Youth Participation Working Group of the Foundation for Young Australians
Luke Raffin	* Judging Panel, National Awards for Innovation in Local Government (Youth Services) * Awarded a scholarship to travel to Vietnam * Won the Federal Government's Award for Regional Initiative in the Victorian finals for the Young Australian of the Year in 2000
Jessica Munn	* Judging Panel, National Awards for Innovation in Local Government (Youth Services)
Tim Goodwin	* Australian representative to the UN Special Session on Children in New York in May 2002 * Member of the judging panel, Centrelink Youth Art Competition * Participated in The International Youth Parliament 2000 in Sydney * Participated in the attorney General's conference on Racism
Verne Smith	* Member of The NSW State Youth Media forum * Roundtable report on sexuality, discrimination and harassment in schools was published in the December 2000 edition of Youth Studies Australia
Prashanth Shanmugan	* Participated in the filming of a Film Australia video for the Visions Theatre of the National Museum of Australia. the program explores how young people see the future and contrasts with these visions against the visions of earlier generations. * Member of planning committee for National Youth Week 2001 * Selected to participate as a member of the Youth Participation Working Group of the Foundation for Young Australians

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Michelle Stephens	* Member of planning committee for National Youth Week 2001
Emily McPherson	* Presented a paper at Victoria University Conference New Democracies in Youth, Education and Community
Vanessa Elliot	* Won the Youth Leadership category in the Western Australian youth Awards in 2001 * Named NAIDOC Youth of the Year in 2001
Fabian (Jamie) Kantilla	* Spoke on preventative action in relation to self-harming behaviour at the International Youth Conference on Suicide * Nominated to attend the World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in South Africa as a youth representative
Mark Tomasz	* Appointed as a member of the Australian Taxation Office Personal Tax Advisory Group
Michael Clark	Selected as a delegate of the Commonwealth Youth Forum
Ipsita Roy	* Member of the National Youth Roundtable 2002 independent selection panel

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1999 Nicola Haswell	* Appointed as a member of the Taskforce advising the Government on the Youth Pathways Action Plan.
Matthew Harrison	* Appointed to the Australian delegation to the United Nation's Commission on Sustainable Development forum in New York as the guest of Senator Hill * Appointed as a member of the Taskforce advising the Government on the Youth Pathways Action Plan. * Participated in the International Youth Parliament 2000 in Sydney
Tom Monks	* Appointed to the Planning Committee for National Youth Week 1999/2000
Michelle Beg	* Appointed as the Convenor of the Australian Youth Affairs Network * Youth representative on the Partnerships Committee for the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation * Appointed as a member of the Taskforce advising the Government on the Youth Pathways Action Plan.
Samantha Splatt	* Appointed as a delegate to the National Advisory Committee for Drugs Education in Schools * Appointed as a member of the Taskforce advising the Government on the Youth Pathways Action Plan.
Alison Hardacre	* Participated in the judging of the 2000 National Youth Media Awards
Aaron Gray	* Participated in the judging of the 2000 National Youth Media Awards * Appointed as a member of the Taskforce advising the Government on the Youth Pathways Action Plan.
Mia Handsin	* Represented Australia at the World Summit of Children in San Francisco * Governor-General at the National Youth Parliament
Scott Robertson	* Represented Australia at the World Summit of Children in San Francisco
Rob Galea	* Participated in the judging of the National Youth Week music competition - rockIT
Simon Baptist	* Selected to serve on a UNESCO Education Group Committee * Selected as a delegate for the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2001
Kelly O'Dwyer	* Facilitator for the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2001 * Part of the Australian Delegation to the Regional Advisory Board meeting of the Commonwealth Youth Programme in Nauru in October 1999 and was subsequently elected Deputy President of the Board and represented Australia in Honiara in May 2000 * Appointed as a member of the Taskforce advising the Government on the Youth Pathways Action Plan. * Part of the Australian Delegation to the APEC Youth Networking Forum held in Thailand in 2000
Matthew Harrison	* Participated in The International Youth Parliament 2000 in Sydney
Kylie Lane	* Appointed as a member of the Taskforce advising the Government on the Youth Pathways Action Plan.
Alicia Curtis	* Selected as a delegate for the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2001 * Part of the Australian Delegation to the APEC Youth Networking Forum held in Thailand in 2000
Tam Tran	* Part of the Australian Delegation to the APEC Youth Networking Forum held in Thailand in 2000
Ben Playle	* Part of the Australian Delegation to the APEC Youth Networking Forum held in Thailand in 2000
Michael Zorbas	* Part of the Australian Delegation to the APEC Youth Networking Forum held in Thailand in 2000
Andrew Charlton	* Won a Rhodes scholarship in 2000

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QON 18 Attachment A

Voices of Youth Expenditure 2000-2001 (Actual) and 2001-2002 (Estimate)

ACTIVITY	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)	2001-2002 EXPENDITURE (ESTIMATE)
Voices of Youth Initiative		
National Youth Roundtable (NYRT)	\$542,142	\$591,395
Rostrum Voice of Youth Final	\$37,718	\$26,400
National Youth Initiative - National Youth Congress	\$10,000	\$0
YMCA Youth Parliament	\$40,000	\$0
International Youth Parliament	\$10,000	\$0
National Youth Science Forum	\$20,000	\$20,000
<u>Total VOY</u>	<u>\$659,860</u>	<u>\$637,795</u>

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Output Group: 1.2-Youth and Students Support

Question No: 19

Topic: Youth Bureau

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a. Will the role of the Youth Bureau in DFACS change as opposed to its operation in DETYA?
 - I. Will there be an increased link on other family and welfare issues?
 - II. Will there be a decreased emphasis on employment and education?
- b. How many staff members will be employed in the Youth Bureau (breakdown to National Office and State Offices)?
 - I. What will their roles be?
 - II. What projects will they administer and focus on?
 - III. What interaction now will there be between FACS, DEST, DEWR on Youth Issues?
- c. Is it correct that the Commonwealth Youth Affairs National Battle of the Bands Competition has been told that it will not receive funding for this year.
 - I. What is the reason for this?

Will there be funding made available for the Rock Eisteddfod?

- d. How many were employed within the Bureau at DETYA?
- e. The Additional Estimates Statement says "The staffing consequences of the transfer of Youth Affairs are not reflected in the portfolio's estimates and will be reported in the 2002-03 Portfolio Budget Statements." What will happen before this?

Answer:

- a. No.
 - I. Yes
 - II. No
- b. The Youth Bureau currently has 51 officers. The State/ Territory and regional office staff are not Youth Bureau staff. In capital cities, youth support is provided through the FaCS State/Territory Office (STO) network. Resources are allocated in each STO according to workload priorities. In regional locations, youth services are provided by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) through a Memorandum of Understanding. Eighteen regional locations are serviced through this arrangement.
 - I. The role of Youth Bureau is to ensure that the Government's policies improve life prospects for all young people through improved coordination at Commonwealth and State levels, communication and consultation with young people, delivery of programmes and services for young people, promotion of positive perceptions of young people in the community, promotion of accredited development opportunities for young people and the provision of national leadership on youth issues.

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II. In 2001-2002 the Youth Bureau will administer the following projects:

Youth Bureau Projects
National Youth Roundtable (NYRT)
Australian Forum of Youth Organisations
Australian National Clearinghouse
National Indigenous Leadership Group
Domestic Violence
First Australians Business
UN Session on Children
World Conference on Racism
Rostrum Voice of Youth Final
National Youth Affairs Research Scheme
Boonah Shire Youth at the Centre
National Youth Science Forum
Rural Youth Information Service (RYIS)
Innovative and Collaborative Youth Servicing Pilots
Young Offender's Pilot Programme (YOPP)
Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) Programme
Green Corps
Ausyouth
Shoalhaven Youth Development Project
Come and Try Day
National Awards for Innovation in Local Government
Rock Eisteddfod
Battle of the Bands
Young Australian of the Year Sponsorship
National Youth Media Awards
National Youth Week
Youth Portal
The Source
True Blue Dreaming Tour

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- I. The Youth Bureau will continue to work with all agencies that have an interest in youth issues.

c) Yes.

- I. In recent years the number of participating bands in Battle of the Bands has reduced. This has coincided with the emergence of a number of other projects that encourage young people's participation in music related activities.

YEAR	Number of bands involved
1998	213
1999	189
2000	190
2001	172

** Information collected from Battle of the Bands end of year reports.*

II. Yes

- d) The Youth Bureau employed 51 staff immediately before its transfer from the DETYA portfolio.
- e) The administrative processes to transfer the Youth Bureau from the then Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) to the Department of Family and Community services (FaCS) were not finalised before the closing date for the Portfolio Additional Estimates (PAES). These processes will be finalised and the relevant information included in the 2002-03 Portfolio Budget Statements.

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth & Students

Question No: 20

Topic: Youth Activities Services

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) 'Can you provide a list of the successful YAS organisations and what electorates they are in.
- b) 'The Program is described as targeting disadvantaged regions – how is that assessed for the purposes of the program?
- c) 'Are there applications for funding for the program offered yearly?
- d) 'How many organisations applied for funding and were rejected?
- e) 'Was there a review of this funding program – what was conducted by the department? What did it find?
- f) 'Since the program has been running, has any organisation that was not successful in the first year of the program receive any funding after this first year? *If not what was the reason for this?*

Answer:

- a) A list of all successful Youth Activities Services/Family Liaison Worker (YAS/FLW) services and the electorates that they are in is at Attachment A.
- b) Services are located in high need areas/regions. These were identified through indicators including:
 - the ABS Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage, and
 - the proportion of 11-16 year olds within the total population.
- c) Funding is not offered on a yearly basis. Funding to individual services is ongoing pending contractual arrangements being satisfactorily met. The current 3 year Funding Agreements will expire at the end of the 2003/2004 financial year.
- d) The program commenced in 1990. Responsibility for the YAS Program moved from the then Department of Health and Community Services to the Department of Family and Community Services in November 1998. Since that time funding for the program has been fully committed and there has been no public funding round.
- e) A internal review of the Youth Activities Services Program was conducted by the Department of Family and Community Services in July 2000 in consultation with service providers and State and Territory FaCS Offices.

The review made a number of operational and policy recommendations. Key recommendations included:

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- that all services be moved onto the Family and Community Services standard funding agreement,
 - that the Youth Activities Services/Family Liaison Worker program guidelines be updated, and
 - that good practice principles be incorporated into the program guidelines.
- f) A review of available records indicates that there are no organisations that were unsuccessful in the first year of the program now receiving funding.

The Youth Activities Services program provides recurrent funding for the provision of ongoing services. It does not provide one-off or project funding. As funding for the program is fully committed, organisations that made unsuccessful bids in previous years have not had the opportunity to reapply for funding.

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Output Group: 1.2 – Youth and Student Support.....Question No: 21

Topic: Reconnect

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) Could the Department provide the latest figures on the number of homeless youth in Australia?
- b) How many Reconnect services have been announced?
- c) Can you provide a list of the services that have been funded (name of service and location)?
- d) When does the Department envisage that the remaining services will be announced?
- e) Is it possible to obtain copies of the Program Evaluations?
- f) Is there any other assessment of the Program's success that the Department could make available?

Answer:

- a) The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) provides assistance to homeless people and people at risk of homelessness, although not all homeless people will access SAAP for support. According to the latest SAAP data there were around 33,200 young people aged under 25 years who accessed SAAP services during 2000-2001.

The Reconnect Program was developed to assist young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and their families through strategies of early intervention. Reconnect data indicates that 2767 young people and their families have received support from Reconnect since July 2001.

- b) Currently 92 Reconnect services have been announced.
- c) See [Attachment A](#).
- d) The Department is committed to delivering effective and culturally appropriate services in indigenous communities. To this end the Department is currently working actively with 8 indigenous communities to develop a Reconnect service. Services in these communities will be announced as the developmental work in each is finalised.
- e) An evaluation of the Reconnect program is currently underway and the anticipated completion date is September 2003. It is anticipated that an interim report will be released in June 2002 which will be available for community consultation.
- f) A copy of the Reconnect Data Report December 2001 is currently available on the Internet at http://www.facs.gov.au/Internet/FaCSInternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/youth-reconnect_data_rpt.htm

A media release about the Reconnect Data Report, dated 30 January 2002 states that:

“Of the parents and young people who agreed to provide feedback on the Reconnect program, nearly 70 percent reported a significant improvement in the young person's level of engagement with their family”.

“In addition in almost 50 per cent of cases where a young person living away from home sought assistance through a Reconnect service, they subsequently returned to live with their family”.

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FUNDED RECONNECT SERVICES AS AT 25 FEBRUARY 2002

State	Name of Reconnect Service	Geographical Location
New South Wales	Creative Times (An Initiative of the Samaritan Foundation)	Newcastle, Lake Macquarie
	Southern Youth and Family Services Assoc. Inc.	Wollongong, Shellharbour, Dapto, Ulladulla, Nowra
	Northern Rivers Social Development Council Inc	Tweed Heads, Byron Bay, Ballina, Lismore, Kyogle, Casino, Richmond River, Uralla, Nymboida, Maclean, Grafton
	Wesley Dalmar Child and Family Services	Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Penrith
	The Twenty Ten Association Inc	State-wide
	Bega Valley Shire Council	Bega Valley
	Vinnies Reconnect	Deniliquin, Wakool, Murray, Hay, Windouran, Conargo
	Burnside Macarthur Care	Camden, Wollondilly, Cambelltown
	Inner City Sydney (Mission Australia in collaboration with the Salvation Army and Wesley Mission)	Inner City Sydney, Lower North Shore and Inner West
	Centacare Central West NSW	Cowra, West Wyalong, Grenfell, Booroowa, Blayney, Molong and surrounding areas
	Salvation Army Youthlink	Blacktown, Mt Druitt, and Doonside
	Newtrain Inc	New England – Narrabri and Gunnedah
	Grace Cottage Inc.	Dubbo local government area
	St George Youth Workers Network	Hurstville, Rockdale, Kogarah local government areas
	Banardos Wellington	Wellington, Narromine, and Gilgandra local government areas
	Banardos Mudgee	Mudgee, Rylstone, and Coolah local government areas
	Banardos Canterbury	Marrickville and Canterbury local government areas
	Sydney Anglican Home Mission Society (Anglicare)	Fairfield and Liverpool local government areas
	Mission Australia, Punchbowl	Bankstown and Auburn local government areas

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State	Name of Reconnect Service	Geographical Location
	Broken Hill and District Family Support Service	Central Darling Area, including Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Mennindee, and Ivanhoe
	Regional Extended Family Services	Kempsey/Hastings
	Cobar Domesic Violence Committee	Cobar, Bogan, and Warren local government areas
	Coonabarabran Local Aboriginal Lands Council	Coonabarabran and Coonamble shires
	Samaritans Foundation	Cessnock and Maitland local government areas
	The Salvation Army Mental Health Reconnect	Sydney
	Great Mates Inc	Penrith/Mt Druitt
	Regional Extended Family Services	Armidale, Guyra, Glen Innes, Inverell and surrounding towns (including Tenterfield, Tingha, Warialda, Bingara and Ashford)
	Uniting Care Burnside	Central Coast – Gosford and Wyong local government areas
	Bellingen Shire Council	Bellingen and Nambucca Shires/Dorrigo
Victoria	Eltham Community Health Centre	Local government area of Banyule, and Nillumbik
	Regional Extended Family Services Incorporated (REFS)	Local government area of Yarra Ranges, Maroondah, Knox
	Central Gippsland Accommodation and Support Services Inc	Gippsland (La Trobe Valley and Baw Baw)
	Melbourne City mission Inc	Local government area of Maribyrnong, Brimbank and Moree Valley
	Quantum Support Services	Greater Geelong
	Werribee Support and Housing Group	Hobson's Bay and Wyndham
	North East Support & Action for Youth Inc	Delatite, Wangaratta, and Alpine
	Central Highland Reconnect Lisa Lodge and Child and Family Services Ballarat Inc.	Ballarat, Moorabool, Hepburn, and Golden Plains
	Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues	Dandenong and Glenroy

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State	Name of Reconnect Service	Geographical Location
	Salvation Army Crossroads Reconnect	Hume and Moreland
	Kildonan Child and Family Services	Darebin, Yarra, and Whittlesea
	Salvation Army South East	Frankston and Mornington Peninsula
	Uniting Care Connections	Greater Dandenong and Casey
	Lakes Entrance Community Health Centre	East Gippsland
	St Luke's Anglicare	Central Goldfields, Bendigo, Mt Alexander
	Melbourne City Mission	Melbourne central business district
	Youth Substance Abuse Service	Local government areas of Whitehorse and Monash
	Regional Extended Family Services – Wilderness Service	Metropolitan and regional Victoria
	Melton Shire Council	Melton local government area
Tasmania	Colony 47 Inc	Greater Hobart
	Anglicare Tasmanic Inc. Bridges Project	Burnie, Devonport
	Colony 47 Inc.	Hobart, Kingston, Brighton, New Norfolk, Sorell, and Huon Valley
	Relationships Australia	Greater Launceston, Scottsdale, and Deloraine
	Anglicare Tasmania	Rural and remote areas of Tasmania including Hobart, Launceston and Devonport.
Queensland	Mercy Family Services Ipswich-Goodna-Inala	Inala to Ipswich, Goodna, Brassell, Redbank Plains, Oxley and Riverview
	Gold Coast Project for Homeless Youth Inc	Goldcoast – from Southport to Helensvale and Mudgeeraba
	Roseberry Youth Services Inc	Gladstone
	Integrated Youth Service	Caloundra City, Kawana and Golden Beach
	Lutheran Community Care Bridges – Logan/Beenleigh Reconnect Program	Logan (focus on Western Logan area, Marsden and Browns Plains)
	Community Solutions	Local government area Hervey Bay, Maryborough

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State	Name of Reconnect Service	Geographical Location
	Centacare	Mt Isa
	Queensland Youth Services Inc	SLA of Thuringowa A & B, Kelso, Mt Luisa
	Mercy Family Services	South Brisbane, Dutton Park, West End, Highgate Hill, Woolloongabba, Annerley, Kangaroo Point and East Brisbane
	Community Living Association	North Brisbane, Zillmere, Nudgee, Northgate, Windsor, Nundah, Chermide, Bowen Hills, Albion, Kelvin Grove, Newmarket, Wilston, Wavell Heights, Wooloowin and Kedron
	Connections	Murgon and Cherbourg
	Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee Inc	Rockhampton and district
	Mission Australia	Toowoomba, Warwick, Gatton and Dalby
	Sisters Inside Inc	South East Queensland
	Brisbane Youth Services Inc	Greater Brisbane area
Australian Capital Territory	Centacare, Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulbourn	ACT region and bordering NSW area
	Gugan Galwan Aboriginal Corporation, Canberra	ACT region (Indigenous Community)
Western Australia	Agencies for South West Accommodation Inc.	Bunbury, Capel, Busselton, Dunsborough, Margaret River, Augusta, Nannup, Collie, Harvey, Donnybrook, Brunswick and Australind
	Mercy Community Services Inc Perth	Central North Metropolitan Perth
	Mercy Community Services Inc Perth	South East Metropolitan Perth
	Burdekin Youth In Action	Broome
	Mercy Community Services Inc Perth	North West Coastal Perth
	Mercy Community Services Inc Perth	South West Coastal Perth
	Parkerville Children's Home	North East Metropolitan Perth

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State	Name of Reconnect Service	Geographical Location
	Outcare Inc	Metropolitan Perth
	Mercy Community Services	Mid west region of WA including Kalgoorlie and Geraldton
	Mission Australia	Mandurah and Peel
Northern Territory	Anglicare Top End Darwin Urban	Darwin, Darwin Rural Area,
	Anglicare Top End Palmerston	Palmerston, extending to Adelaide River
	Gap Youth Centre Aboriginal Corporation	Amoonguna, Jay Creek and Out Stations in the west, Yambah Station, Mt Undoolya and White Gate
South Australia	Adelaide Central Mission Inc	Local government area of Salisbury
	Port Pirie Central Mission Inc	Port Pirie, Mt Remarkable, Kanyank, Quorn, Port Augusta and unincorporated Flinders Rangers
	Mission Australia SA and Southern Junction Youth Services	Local government are of Onkaparinga
	City of Port Adelaide/Enfield	Local government area of Port Adelaide and Enfield
	Anglicare Playford	Playford City Council (formerly City of Elizabeth and Munno Para)
	Anglican Community Care Inc.	Murray Mallee
	Multicultural Communities Council of SA Inc	Metropolitan Adelaide
	Centacare Mental Health Reconnect	Metropolitan Adelaide (with some outreach support to regional areas).
	*Whyalla Youth Accommodation Support Services	Whyalla and the Upper Eyre Peninsula of South Australia

*Whyalla Youth Accommodation Support Services is currently undergoing administrative processes prior to receiving funding.

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support

Question No: 22

Topic: JPET

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a. Does the Department foresee any changes to the operation of JPET with the move from DETYA to FaCS?
- b. What are the results/outcomes of the programmes so far?
- c. How many people has it assisted?
- d. The Youth Pathways Report recommended a number of changes to the JPET Programme – what action has the Department taken in response to this recommendation?

Answer:

- a. No.
- b. An external evaluation of the JPET Programme shows key results for clients who were able to be interviewed at 3 and 6 months post-exit, to be:
 - Access to safe accommodation increased from an overall prevalence of 58% on entry to JPET to 80% on exit, ultimately increasing to 85% six months post-exit;
 - Participation levels in education/training increased from an overall prevalence of 19% on entry to JPET to 44% on exit and 41% at six months post exit; and
 - Employment levels also showed major improvements with an overall prevalence of only 1% on entry to JPET increasing to 27% on exit and 29% at six months post exit.
- c. The programme assisted 15,972 clients in the 2000/2001 financial year. The programme has assisted 10,505 clients from July 2001 to date.
- d. The Department has called for concept proposals to discover innovative and collaborative ways in which Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments can work with community agencies to develop local packages of support for young people with high support needs. It is anticipated that 26 Innovative and Collaborative Youth Servicing Pilots will commence in April/May 2002. Findings from these pilots will be used to inform development of new approaches to the delivery of JPET.

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support

Question No: 23

Topic: Youth Suicide

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) What programs currently exist for reducing the number of Youth suicides?
- b) Are there any proposals to expand any of these programs?
- c) Are there any new programs in this area that are currently being developed by the Department? – if so when were they initiated?
- d) What funding sources within FACS are available to organisations that seek to minimise youth suicide?
- e) Have there been any requests for funding to FACS to by these organisations this year?
- f) What have been the outcomes of these applications?
- g) What research has been done recently by the department on the issues of Youth suicide, young people and drugs and mental health issues?

Answers:

- a) Currently, there are no programs within the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) that specifically target youth suicide issues. Such issues fall within the Department of Health and Ageing portfolio.
- b) Not applicable.
- c) There are no new youth suicide programs currently being developed by FaCS.
- d) There are no funding sources within FaCS for organisations whose sole focus is to minimise youth suicide. As indicated above, youth suicide falls within the portfolio of the Department of Health and Ageing.
- e) Initial assessment within FaCS suggests that there has been at least one request for funding from organisations whose direct focus is to minimise youth suicide. The funding request dated 11 February 2002 has been forwarded to the Youth Bureau by Here for Life, an organisation with the primary aim of youth suicide prevention. The funding application is for the “Life’s a Ball” programme which seeks to use elite athletes to deliver the programme through schools. The Youth Bureau is currently assessing the organisation’s proposal. FaCS would need to conduct a thorough data search to provide a more conclusive response, if required.
- f) Not applicable.
- g) No specific research on the issues of youth suicide, young people and drugs or mental health issues has been conducted.

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Output Group: Output Group 1.2 – Youth and Student Support

Question No: 24

Topic: Youth Affairs Grants and Publicity

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a. Does the Department have details on how much the States provide to the National Youth Week?
- b. Can the Department provide details of what the \$516,000 was spent on for the Youth Media Awards held on 31 May 2001
- c. Has funding for YAGAP projects for 2001-02 been set at \$3.7 million?
- d. What has been the effect of this cut in expenditure in terms of the types of projects either no longer funded or receiving less funding?
- e. Can the Department provide a listing of YAGAP miscellaneous small grants and primary activities for last year?
- f. Is it possible for the Department to provide this information by electorate?
- g. Are there plans to restructure YAGAP with the change in portfolio responsibility for youth?

Answer:

- a. The Department does not have this information. The contributions of State and Territory Governments will be at their individual discretion.
- b. \$516,000 was spent on the 2000 National Youth Media Awards. The cost of the 2001 National Youth Media Awards was \$573,447, broken down as follows:

Advertising and Promotion	\$165,835
Travel and Accommodation	\$23,695
Event Management and Administration	\$383,917
- c. Yes, funding for YAGAP projects in 2001-2002 was set at \$3.7 million.
- d. Two programmes, the Rural Youth Information Service and the Young Offenders Pilot Project are now funded from Targeted Youth Assistance Programme, this reduces the demand on YAGAP.
- e. A list of funding provided to State and Territory Offices in 2000-2001 under YAGAP is at Attachment A. A breakdown of primary activities for last year (2000-2001) is provided at Attachment B.
- f. Information on YAGAP expenditure for 2000-2001 by electorate is at Attachment C and Attachment D.
- g. No.

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QON 24 Attachment A

2000-2001 YAGAP Actual Expenditure by State & Territory Offices on Youth Related Projects

<i>Description</i>	<i>Value</i>
NSW – Local initiatives promoting positive images of young people	\$2163
NSW – Providing young people with information on career and further education opportunities in their locality and elsewhere	\$2603
NSW – Information products – raising awareness among young people of government and non-government services available in their locality	\$14391
NSW – Local government and non-government youth service and support projects	\$6098
NT – Local initiatives promoting positive images of young people	\$1100
NT – Information products – raising awareness among young people of government and non-government services available in their locality	\$2192
NT – Local government and non-government youth service and support projects	\$3975
QLD – Local initiatives promoting positive images of young people	\$4885
QLD – Providing young people with information on career and further education opportunities in their locality and elsewhere	\$96
QLD – Local government and non-government youth service and support projects	\$600
QLD – Information products – raising awareness among young people of government and non-government services available in their locality	\$11779
QLD – Youth forums and consultations	\$1909
SA – Information products – raising awareness among young people of government and non-government services available in their locality	\$6990
SA – Local government and non-government youth service and support projects	\$9453
TAS – Local initiatives promoting positive images of young people	\$4772
TAS – Local government and non-government youth service and support projects	\$795
TAS – Information products – raising awareness among young people of government and non-government services available in their locality	\$691
VIC – Local initiatives promoting positive images of young people	\$7600
VIC – Information products – raising awareness among young people of government and non-government services available in their locality	\$5155
VIC – Providing young people with information on career and further education opportunities in their locality and elsewhere	\$4203
VIC – Local government and non-government youth service and support projects	\$1270
WA – Local initiatives promoting positive images of young people	\$1382
WA – Providing young people with information on career and further education opportunities in their locality and elsewhere	\$4000
WA – Information products – raising awareness among young people of government and non-government services available in their locality	\$5799
WA – Local government and non-government youth service and support projects	\$6185
Total -	\$110,086

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QON 24 Attachment B

YAGAP Expenditure 2000-2001 (Actual)

ACTIVITY	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)
Voices of Youth	
National Youth Roundtable (NYRT)	\$542,142
Rostrum Voice of Youth Final	\$37,718
National Youth Initiative - National Youth Congress	\$10,000
YMCA Youth Parliament	\$40,000
International Youth Parliament	\$10,000
National Youth Science Forum	\$20,000
<u>Total VoY</u>	<u>\$659,860</u>

ACTIVITY	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)
Rural Youth Information Service (RYIS)	
RYIS Contracts	\$501,126
<u>Total RYIS</u>	<u>\$501,126</u>
Young Offender's Pilot Programme (YOPP)	
Victorian Extension	\$178,257
Evaluation to Northern Territory and Western Australia	\$88,472
<u>Total YOPP</u>	<u>\$266,729</u>

ACTIVITY	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)
Youth Development Projects	
First Australians Business	\$125,000
Enterprise Development Workshop	\$50,000
Australis Self Made Girl – Business Mentoring for Young Women	\$5,000
Apprenticeships & Traineeships for Young Women Project	\$18,800
National Awards for Innovation in Local Government	\$16,500
Australian Forum of Youth Organisations	\$46,000
ASTF Demonstration Project – Indigenous Student Coordinator	\$25,000
Life's A Ball Programme – Youth Suicide Prevention	\$80,000
<u>Total Youth Development</u>	<u>\$366,300</u>

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QON 24 Attachment B Ctn

ACTIVITY	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)
Events Promoting a Positive Image of Young People, including the Rock Eisteddfod	
Rock Eisteddfod	\$121,822
Battle of the Bands	\$55,000
Young Australian of the Year	\$75,000
Information Products	\$99,401
<u>Total Events Promoting a Positive Image</u>	<u>\$351,223</u>
Awards & Scholarships, including the Youth Media Awards	
National Youth Media Awards	\$499,745
Australian Violence Prevention Awards	\$10,000
<u>Total Awards & Scholarships</u>	<u>\$509,745</u>
National Youth Week	
National Youth Week (NYW)	\$595,454
<u>Total National Youth Week</u>	<u>\$595,454</u>

ACTIVITY	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)
Workshops, Information & Support	
WA Disability Student Liaison Officer - Edith Cowan University	\$50,000
Tasmanian Careers Expo	\$7,000
Australian Graduate Careers Advisory Services Best Practice Award	\$1,000
VETNETwork2000 Conference	\$15,000
Youth Trial Projects Support	\$5,000
<u>Total Workshops, etc</u>	<u>\$78,000</u>

ACTIVITY	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)
Research, including the Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies & the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS)	
NYARS	\$100,000
Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies	\$191,418
Three Year Longitudinal Study of Young People Participating in Youth Development Projects	\$242,000
<u>Total Research</u>	<u>\$533,418</u>
State Office Funding & Officers Conference	
State Office Youth Funds (see Attachment A)	\$110,086
Total Expenditure	\$3,971,941

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QON 24 Attachment C

2000-2001 YAGAP Actual Expenditure by State & Territory Offices on Youth Related Projects by electorate.

ELECTORATE & STATE	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)
Calare (NSW)	\$2,500
Cunningham (NSW)	\$2,179
Dobell (NSW)	\$568
Eden-Monaro (NSW)	\$2,572
Gilmore (NSW)	\$300
Gwydir (NSW)	\$3,563
Hume (NSW)	\$839
Newcastle (NSW)	\$454
Page (NSW)	\$533
Parkes (NSW)	\$2,590
Patterson (NSW)	\$909
Riverina (NSW)	\$3,272
Robertson (NSW)	\$568
Throsby (NSW)	\$200
Canberra (ACT)	\$667
Fraser (ACT)	\$667
Bruce (VIC)	\$606
Corio (VIC)	\$2,727
Gippsland (VIC)	\$500
Holt (VIC)	\$606
Issaacs (VIC)	\$606
McMillan (VIC)	\$1,000
Mallee (VIC)	\$4,373
Bowman (QLD)	\$750
Brisbane (QLD)	\$909
Fadden (QLD)	\$221
Fairfax (QLD)	\$1,000
Forde (QLD)	\$200
Griffith (QLD)	\$250
Groom (QLD)	\$95
Herbert (QLD)	\$900
Kennedy (QLD)	\$1,000
Leichhardt (QLD)	\$750
McPherson (QLD)	\$200
Maranoa (QLD)	\$1,500
Moncrieff (QLD)	\$200
Oxley (QLD)	\$307
Rankin (QLD)	\$1,221
Wide Bay (QLD)	\$2,578
Bass (TAS)	\$165
Denison (TAS)	\$108
Franklin (TAS)	\$108

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2000-2001 YAGAP Actual Expenditure by State & Territory Offices on Youth Related Projects by electorate (continued).

ELECTORATE & STATE	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)
Lyons (TAS)	\$273
Adelaide (SA)	\$1,870
Barker (SA)	\$1,241
Boothby (SA)	\$400
Grey (SA)	\$303
Hindmarsh (SA)	\$1,292
Kingston (SA)	\$660
Mayo (SA)	\$1,927
Port Adelaide (SA)	\$2,000
Wakefield (SA)	\$1,950
Brand (WA)	\$1,045
Canning (WA)	\$45
Cowan (WA)	\$45
Curtin (WA)	\$45
Fremantle (WA)	\$1,045
Kalgoorlie (WA)	\$7,685
Moore (WA)	\$45
Pearce (WA)	\$45
Perth (WA)	\$545
Stirling (WA)	\$45
Swan (WA)	\$45
Tangney (WA)	\$45
Northern Territory (NT)	\$7,267
<u>Not Attributable</u>	
- NSW State-wide	\$2,874
- VIC State-wide	\$7,810
- TAS State-wide	\$5,604
- SA State-wide	\$4,800
- WA State-wide	\$6,686
- QLD State-wide	\$5,230
- Brisbane Metropolitan Area	\$1,958
Total	\$110,086

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QON 24 Attachment D

YAGAP Expenditure 2000-2001 by Electorate

ACTIVITY	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)	ELECTORATE & STATE
Voices of Youth		
National Youth Roundtable (NYRT)	\$542,142	National
Rostrum Voice of Youth Final	\$37,718	National
National Youth Initiative - National Youth Congress	\$10,000	National
YMCA Youth Parliament	\$40,000	National
International Youth Parliament	\$10,000	National
National Youth Science Forum	\$20,000	National
<u>VoY</u>	<u>\$659,860</u>	
Rural Youth Information Service (RYIS)		
RYIS Contracts:	\$501,126	National
<u>Total RYIS</u>	<u>\$501,126</u>	
Young Offender's Pilot Programme (YOPP)		
Victorian Extension	\$178,257	State-wide, VIC
Evaluation to Northern Territory and Western Australia	\$88,472	State-wide, NT & WA
<u>Total YOPP</u>	<u>\$266,729</u>	
Youth Development Projects		
First Australians Business	\$125,000	National
Enterprise Development Workshop	\$50,000	National
Australis Self Made Girl – Business Mentoring for Young Women	\$5,000	National
Apprenticeships & Traineeships for Young Women Project	\$18,800	National
National Awards for Innovation in Local Government	\$16,500	National
Australian Forum of Youth Organisations	\$46,000	National
ASTF Demonstration Project – Indigenous Student Coordinator	\$25,000	Gwydir (NSW)
Life's A Ball Programme – Youth Suicide Prevention	\$80,000	State-wide, VIC
<u>Total Youth Development</u>	<u>\$366,300</u>	

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QON 24 ttachment D ctn

YAGAP Expenditure 2000-2001 by Electorate (Cont)

ACTIVITY	2000-2001 EXPENDITURE (ACTUAL)	ELECTORATE & STATE
Events Promoting a Positive Image of Young People, including the Rock Eisteddfod		
Rock Eisteddfod	\$121,822	National
Battle of the Bands	\$55,000	National
Young Australian of the Year	\$75,000	National
Information Products	\$99,401	National
<u>Total Events Promoting a Positive Image</u>	<u>\$351,223</u>	
Awards & Scholarships, including the Youth Media Awards		
National Youth Media Awards	\$499,745	National
Australian Violence Prevention Awards	\$10,000	National
<u>Total Awards & Scholarships</u>	<u>\$509,745</u>	
National Youth Week		
National Youth Week (NYW)	\$595,454	National
<u>Total National Youth Week</u>	<u>\$595,454</u>	
Workshops, Information & Support		
WA Disability Student Liaison Officer - Edith Cowan University	\$50,000	State wide, WA
Tasmanian Careers Expo	\$7,000	Denison (TAS)
Australian Graduate Careers Advisory Services Best Practice Award	\$1,000	National
VETNETwork2000 Conference	\$15,000	National
Youth Trial Projects Support	\$5,000	National
<u>Total Workshops, etc</u>	<u>\$78,000</u>	
Research, including the Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies & the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS)		
NYARS	\$100,000	National
Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies	\$191,418	National
Three Year Longitudinal Study of Young People Participating in Youth Development Projects	\$242,000	National
<u>Total Research</u>	<u>\$533,418</u>	
State Offices		
DETYA State Office Youth Funds (see Attachment A)	\$110,086	(See Attachment A)
<u>Total Expenditure</u>	<u>\$3,971,941</u>	

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support.....QuestionNo: 25

Topic: Green Corps

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a. On what basis are applications for green corps funding selected?
- b. Can the department provide a full listing of the approved sites for each year since the program's introduction?
- c. Can the department provide this listing by electorate?
- d. Can the department provide numbers of the rejected applications and the reasons that they were rejected?
- e. Can the department provide this information by electorate?
- f. How many people have participated in green corps since the program's introduction?

Answer:

- a. The programme provider, Conservation Volunteers Australia, in consultation with the Department of Family and Community Services and Environment Australia, assesses applications for funding. As per the contract, the selection process is governed by the Green Corps Project Criteria.

Green Corps Project Criteria

The criteria for Green Corps Projects are:

- Projects must be endorsed by Environment Australia as having the capacity to meet the Commonwealth's environment priorities announced in the policy 'Saving Our Natural Heritage', and also implement the priorities of endorsed regional catchment strategies, plans of management affecting public land, heritage areas, and national parks and reserves;
- Projects must be generally suitable for Green Corps Participants (including hours of participation each week) and have the capacity to provide quality training;
- Projects must be designed to provide developmental opportunities for Green Corps Participants including developing teamwork and leadership skills;
- Projects must be designed to develop the work skills of Green Corps Participants;
- Projects must be designed to have the capacity to raise young people's self esteem and ensure pride in the job;
- Projects must be designed to promote the contribution of young people in the community; portray a positive image of young people and strengthen links of young people with the community;
- Projects must be supported by the local community, including the local Indigenous community, and where possible, designed to encourage the community to take an active role in the Project;
- Projects must be designed to be maintained sustainably where possible;

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- Projects must be designed to include a cohesive Project plan including a data baseline, Project map, and staged development incorporating achievement milestones and monitoring;
- Projects must be compliant with Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government laws and regulations, and be consistent with the National Greenhouse Response Strategy, the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development, the Burra Charter and the Australian Nature Heritage Charter;
- Participants must be additional to the existing workforce, and must not reduce, replace or substitute any existing workers (voluntary or paid);
- Projects must not undertake tasks which are, or should be, the core financial responsibility of a State, Territory or local government authority;
- Partner Agencies must not seek repeat Projects to provide an alternative to creating permanent employment;
- Partner Agencies must have strategies for the long-term maintenance and protection of the Project site to be implemented at the conclusion of the Project; and
- when Projects run concurrently with a project funded by the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT), Partner Agencies do not count Green Corps Participants in their labour-in-kind contribution for NHT funding.

Environmental Priorities

Green Corps Projects will aid in the conservation, protection and restoration of Australia's natural and cultural heritage through linkages with government initiatives. The environmental and heritage priorities for the Green Corps Programme must reflect the following principles stated under the Natural Heritage Trust:

- stimulate significant improvement and greater integration of biodiversity, land, water and vegetation management on public and private land;
- address the causes of problems rather than their symptoms;
- nurture the transparency, integration and understanding between local communities and government agencies;
- encourage management systems that bring long-term environmental, economic and social benefits;
- encourage landholders to make investments to achieve high standards of performance in natural resource and environmental management; and
- reinforce that States and Territories have responsibility for natural resource and environmental management, in keeping with the goals of the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development.

The specific environmental conditions for Green Corps Projects are listed below.

- Projects must be designed to preserve, protect or restore Australia's natural environmental, Indigenous or historic cultural heritage. Projects must also encourage a sense of ownership of Projects by Australian youth.
- Projects must be designed and executed in accordance with best practice for the relevant discipline.
- Projects should be principally located outside urban zones (85% Rural and Remote areas, 15% Metropolitan), and within areas of Australia's natural environment which

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are most at risk. These will include areas subject to land and water degradation, and may include world heritage areas, national parks and nature reserves, coastal areas and forests and arid zones.

- Projects must provide environmental and heritage conservation outcomes. Projects will preferably allow Green Corps teams to assist communities and groups with conservation related tasks that would not otherwise be undertaken. Projects should have the support of the relevant State, Territory and local stakeholders and should be consistent with catchment, regional and conservation management plans where such plans exist, and with conserving existing and potential historic, Indigenous and natural heritage values.
 - Projects should exhibit a very clear community focus and be relevant to the community based environmental initiatives announced in the Commonwealth's environment policy, Saving our Natural Heritage. It is envisaged that Green Corps Projects will provide young people with the opportunity to be involved in a wide range of activities under the policy's Natural Heritage Trust.
 - A wide range of environmental and cultural heritage Projects is envisaged to allow a variety of work to be performed by Green Corps teams. Projects may include land, water and wildlife survey and data collection, Landcare or Coastcare activities, access control, bush regeneration, habitat protection and restoration, environmental weed control, walking track construction, eco-tourism and restoration activities for environment and cultural heritage and community education. Proposals must demonstrate adequate planning and supervision for Green Corps Participants.
 - All works undertaken under the Green Corps Programme must be consistent with the National Greenhouse Response Strategy and the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development, the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975, the Burra Charter, the draft Australian Nature Heritage Charter, and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.
- b) Yes. Please see Attachment A. [Approved Green Corps sites since the program's introduction has not been included in the electronic/printed volume]
- c) Yes. Please see Attachment B for Rounds 1-26 sorted by electorate. Please note that some Projects operated in more than one electorate. [not included in the electronic/printed volume]
- d) The contractor is not required to provide this information to the Department. There is a requirement, however, that they provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants to improve their chances with future applications.
- e) The contractor is not required to provide this information to the Department.
- f) As of 21 January 2002, 8020 participants had participated in 802 projects. Another 36 projects and 360 participants are will commence on March 18, 2002.

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Output Group: 1-3

Question No: 62

Topic: Simplification

Hansard Page: CA149

Senator Denman asked:

Please provide a copy of announcements/recommendations re simplification.

Answer:

A copy of the full report, including the recommendations is attached

[Note: attachments have not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

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Output Group: 1.3 Child Support Agency

Question No: 63

Topic:

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) Can the Agency please provide details on the O'Burtill, Terry case? What legislative impediments if any, exist to granting Mr O'Burtill's request that his case become collectable?
- b) Can the Agency please provide details on the Savage, Julie Case? What legislative impediments, if any, exist to prevent Ms Savage pursuing her claim in the United States?

Answer:

- a) In the interest of client privacy, it is appropriate to provide general information rather than the personal details of individual clients. Child Support legislation provides for either the resident or non-resident parent to apply for a child support assessment. However, the *Child Support (Registration and Collection) Act 1989* allows only the resident parent to apply for the Child Support Agency to enforce payment of the assessment. 48% of parents registered with the Child Support Agency transfer the child support payable directly to the other parent. This is in keeping with two of objectives of the scheme, i.e.
 - Commonwealth involvement and expenditure is limited to the minimum necessary for ensuring children's needs are met; and
 - The overall arrangements are non intrusive to personal privacy and are simple, flexible and efficient.
- b) In the interest of client privacy, it is appropriate to provide general information rather than the personal details of individual clients. Where a parent and child(ren) are residing in Australia and the other parent resides in the USA, the parent can apply to the Australian Child Support Agency for a child support assessment. The Child Support Agency can arrange for the assessment to be enforced in the USA if payment is not made voluntarily. If a parent does not wish to use the Australian child support system they can take action to obtain child support in the USA. There are no Australian legislative impediments to this action and the laws of the appropriate USA state would apply. Such action would be a private matter between the parents and the Australian Child Support Agency would not be involved.

Senior CSA staff are available to discuss case specific details if this would assist.

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Output Group: 1.3 Child Support

Question No: 38

Topic: Quality Assurance/Accreditation Scheme

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) Please provide an update on the implementation of the revised Quality Assurance System in long day care centres which was due for implementation in January 2002.
- b) Please explain the system by which inspections/monitoring of day care centres is undertaken (i.e. how and when centres are notified of inspections, frequency of inspections?)
- c) Please provide an update on implementation of Quality Assurance in the Family Day Care sector which commenced in July 2001.
- d) Please provide an update on the proposed Quality Assurance process for the Outside School Hours Care sector (due for implementation in 2002-03).

Answer:

- a) January 2002 marked the implementation of the revised Quality Assurance System (QIAS). The first centres to progress through the new System are due to submit their Self-study Reports in March 2002.

Approximately 400 Self-study Reports are due to be submitted in the period March to May 2002.

The first accreditation decisions are expected to be made in June 2002.

The final accreditation decisions under the original Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) were made by the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) in late 2001.

In October 2001, the NCAC distributed copies of the following materials to all centres registered to participate in the QIAS:

- *Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Source Book (First Edition 2001);*
- *Quality Improvement and Accreditation Handbook (Second Edition 2001);*
- *Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Self-study Report (Second Edition 2001); and*
- *The Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for Long Day Care Centres in Australia Video*

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The NCAC's website (www.ncac.gov.au) also contains information about the revised QIAS, including an interactive quiz which tests a user's knowledge about the new system.

- b) Under the revised Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS), accredited long day care centres will undergo a validation visit approximately every 2.5 years.

Every 2.5 years, accredited centres are required to submit to the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC), a self-assessment (a Self-study Report) and evaluation of the quality of care provided.

The date the Self-study Report is due is included on the centre's accreditation certificate. The NCAC also writes to centres advising them of the date on which their Self-study Report is due.

Once the Self-study Report has been submitted, the NCAC selects a peer validator from a pool of trained validators. Wherever possible, the NCAC endeavours to allocate a validator with specialised knowledge that matches that nominated by the centre.

Prior to the validation visit taking place, both the validator and the centre have the opportunity to advise the NCAC where a conflict of interest may exist. The NCAC considers each case on its merits and endeavours to find an acceptable validator.

The length of the validation visit is determined by the number of licensed places in the centre. The validator will spend one day in each centre with up to and including 29 places in regular use and two days in each centre with 30 or more places.

The validator does not make the accreditation decision. The validator completes a *Validation Report* based on observations of the centre and its documentation of its performance against the 35 Principles of quality care.

Unaccredited Centres

Centres that do not meet the standards required for accreditation are required to submit a new Self-study Report six months from the date of the NCAC decision.

Once the Self-study Report has been submitted, the procedures outlined above apply.

- c) The implementation of Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) commenced on 1 July 2001. All schemes have registered to participate in FDCQA. The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) has produced several publications to assist schemes with the QA process, including the Quality Practices Guide, Handbook, Self-study Report, and Workbook. In addition, the Department has contracted the Meerilinga Training College to produce a range of training resources to support schemes to participate in FDCQA.

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The Quality Assurance process follows 5 steps:

- Registration
- Self-study and continuous improvement
- Validation
- Moderation
- Accreditation Decision

Pilots have been conducted with a cross section of schemes to inform the development of the quality assurance system as well as for the development of the training packages that will be used by the sector to aid implementation.

It is anticipated that the full cycle of implementing quality assurance into a scheme will take approximately 18 months.

Some Family Day Care schemes will be ready to commence the Validation step as soon as July 2002. The rest of the schemes will go through validation over the next 20 months (to Dec 2003).

Once accredited, schemes are required to progress through the validation and accreditation process every 2.5 years.

- d) The quality assurance system for Outside School Hours Care (OSHCQA) is under development. A joint sector/departmental working group, along with critical friends from the OSHC sector, are in the process of developing indicators of quality practice.
- e) The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs has approved the approach for the implementation of OSHCQA. The approach is for a quality assurance system in which OSHC services participate and comply with quality principles and are validated through a combination of self-assessment and external review. Also included is a requirement for a quality improvement plan and a quality improvement implementation plan.
- f) This approach is similar to that used by the long day care sector with QIAS and the family day care sector with FDCQA.
- g) The next steps in the implementation process are for the selection of an administering authority and the development of an implementation model and associated resources.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care Support

Question No: 26

Topic: Child Care Benefit

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

1. CCB Debts – follow up questions

a) Provide details of CCB debts to families (after the \$1000 waiver) in 2000-2001 year as per the following:

- Number of families with debts over \$1000
- Details of the amounts of debts notified to families over \$1000

b) Breakdown of locations of debts over \$1000

2. Statistics/Usage of CCB

a) Provide a breakdown by State (and LGA) of where CCB has been spent in 2000-2001 and any figures on the first half the 2001-2002 financial year.

b) Provide a breakdown by income group.

3. General Administration of CCB

- Provide a list of the problems encountered by the Department, the FAO and services (as identified by the Dept and by the CCB Reference Group) in the implementation of the CCB.
- Provide detail of how each of these problems is being addressed (both policy and administrative changes that have been made).
- What progress has been made in each of these areas?

Answers:

1. a) Number of families with debts over \$1000 are 6,362. Details of amounts of debts notified to families are provided in response to question on notice number 44 a) and b).

b) Breakdown of locations of debts over \$1000

South Metropolitan NSW	353
Pacific Central	616
South West NSW	357
West NSW	458
Hunter NSW	278

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East Coast NSW	418
South East VIC	656
North Central VIC	583
West VIC	400
Brisbane	770
Central and Northern QLD	344
North Australia	113
South Australia	398
West Australia	492
Tasmania	72
Other	54

Note: Figures as at 11 January 2002

2. a) & b) The requested breakdowns of CCB expenditure are not readily available. To obtain this data would require a significant diversion of the Department's resources. National CCB expenditure data is available. Data on expenditure in 2001 – 02 will be released in the Budget

Financial Year	Expenditure (\$'000)
2000-2001	1 037 137 ¹

1. Source: *FaCS 2000-2001 Annual Report*

3. Problems encountered after the introduction of Child Care Benefit:

Non-lodgment of Statement for Payment and Child Care Usage reports

A number of services initially experienced difficulties in lodging statements of child care usage. Assistance was offered to services whenever the requirement to lodge statements was raised with them through letters, newsletters and numerous individual contacts.

Assistance was provided through:

- peak groups, resource and advisory services;
- the adoption of a proactive approach by the Family Assistance Office to ensure that statements lodged by disk could be processed;
- the Family Assistance Office working directly with outside school hours services in the Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane metropolitan areas to remove any barriers to lodgement;
- the Family Assistance Office adopting a more outreach orientated and educative role with services;
- the Family Assistance Office modifying systems to better facilitate lodgment; and
- improvements in the Family Assistance Office validation processes.

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Acquittal and Error Reports

Initially there were long delays in sending these reports to services due to printing and other difficulties. The Family Assistance Office also acknowledged that the size of the reports created problems for some services.

The Family Assistance Office has modified reports to better suit the needs of the industry including the elimination of unnecessary information. A child payment summary detailing the amount claimed against the amount paid by child was also introduced and made available to services on request.

Software Provider Issues

Some of child care services experienced difficulties lodging valid statements by disk using commercially available software. The Family Assistance Office has adopted various strategies to educate and assist services in lodging valid statements.

In addition, the Family Assistance Office is working with software providers to improve the generation of valid statements by identifying areas of improvement and ensuring that specific issues are addressed and new initiatives are implemented. The Family Assistance Office has also modified systems to better facilitate the lodgement of statements and improved the validation process.

The department is in the process of employing an independent organisation to assess the merits of all software to assist services to purchase the most appropriate software.

Cashflow Issues

Some services did experience cash flow problems in the transitional period and the Family Assistance Office immediately implemented a process for services to access funds where a shortfall occurred. Priority is given to the processing of these requests by Family Assistance Office payment teams.

Child Care Benefit Reference Group

Child Care Benefit was introduced in July 2000. A number of problems were identified during the implementation of Child Care Benefit and in response to these problems the department set up a Child Care Benefit Reference Group. This group comprised representatives from national peak bodies, Centrelink and the Department. The first meeting was held in March 2001 and since then two other meetings have been held.

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Policy Changes

The following policy changes were announced as a direct result of the first Reference Group meeting. These changes reduced some of the administrative burden being experienced by services.

- Parent Statement was no longer required;
- parents were only required to sign attendance records at Vacation Care services once;
- rules relating to parents signing attendance records for school aged children have been relaxed;
- parents no longer need to sign attendance records for allowable absences;
- services able to advise of when a child starts school; and
- services able to unlink families no longer attending their service.

Combining outside school hours care services

In order to further reduce the administrative burden for outside school hours care services, the Family Assistance Office has started to combine before and after school care services where they operate from the same location.

This initiative has the potential to greatly reduce the administrative burden with services required to submit only one usage statement per reporting period. Services may also see a reduction in the number of assessment notices and acquittal reports.

This initiative commenced in January 2002.

Other Administrative Improvements

In consultation with the industry, the Family Assistance Office implemented a number of other administrative changes to improve service to child care providers and foster closer links with child care services. These included:

- the receipting of child care usage statements; and
- improvements to payments letters detailing amounts paid and reason for payment.

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Output Group: 1.4 Childcare SupportQuestion No: 43

Topic: Child Care Benefit – Lump Sum Claims

Hansard Page: CA161

Senator Bishop asked:

What is the number of average monthly applications for a lump sum?

Answer:

On average there are 2897 received monthly.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care Support Question No: 27

Topic: Child Care for Eligible Parents (JET)

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) Provide any information on the employment outcomes for parents who participated in this scheme?
- b) How many child care hours paid for/how many children provided with care?
- c) Provide details of plans for future expansion of this scheme
- d) Provide any information about whether these families continue to use child care after undertaking a JET/Work for the Dole program (e.g. through use of Child Reference Number system?)

Answer:

- a) Reliable information is not available about the employment outcomes for parents who participated in JET and received assistance with child care.
- b) Information is not available about how many child care hours have been paid for. 13,171 child care placements were made for the financial year 2000-01.

Note: This is details of placements, not the actual number of children. Numbers of children would be less than this number as children may be counted more than once.

- c) In September 2002, as part of Australians Working Together, the administration of JET Child Care will be simplified and streamlined providing access to a wider range of customers.

The current system for assessing eligibility for funding will be replaced with standard eligibility criteria and funding levels. Personal Advisers (PA's) and JET Advisers (JA's) will assess JET Child Care eligibility in Centrelink Offices around Australia. Special JET Fee Assistance, which covered some of the gap fees for parents will be replaced with the more generous JET Child Care which will cover 100% of the fees for parents in approved places.

The additional money for JET Child Care is \$9.9 million in total to 2004-2005.

- d) Information is not available on whether these families continue to use child care after undertaking a JET/Work for the Dole program.

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Output Group: 1.4 Childcare Support

Question No: 44

Topic: Child Care Benefit - Overpayments

Hansard Page: CA 161/ 162/ 163

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) Please provide a breakdown of the distribution of overpayments in \$50.00 bands
- b) Please provide the distribution of CCB debts in \$100 bands
- c) Please provide the distribution of top-ups in \$100 bands.

Answer:

- a) see following page
- b) the data is contained in the answer to part a of this question
- c) see following page

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a) Amount of CCB overpayments in \$50 bands

AMOUNT OF OVERPAYMENT	Customers	AMOUNT OF OVERPAYMENT	Customers	AMOUNT OF OVERPAYMENT	Customers
\$0 - \$49	49,038	\$1750 - \$1799	142	\$3500 - \$3549	13
\$50 - \$99	19,484	\$1800 - \$1849	124	\$3550 - \$3599	20
\$100 - \$149	12,374	\$1850 - \$1899	108	\$3600 - \$3649	9
\$150 - \$199	8,642	\$1900 - \$1949	101	\$3650 - \$3699	7
\$200 - \$249	6,408	\$1950 - \$1999	89	\$3700 - \$3749	8
\$250 - \$299	5,079	\$2000 - \$2049	91	\$3750 - \$3799	12
\$300 - \$349	4,054	\$2050 - \$2099	88	\$3800 - \$3849	10
\$350 - \$399	3,305	\$2100 - \$2149	79	\$3850 - \$3899	10
\$400 - \$449	2,765	\$2150 - \$2199	65	\$3900 - \$3949	10
\$450 - \$499	2,201	\$2200 - \$2249	65	\$3950 - \$3999	11
\$500 - \$549	1,947	\$2250 - \$2299	48	\$4000 - \$4049	9
\$550 - \$599	1,635	\$2300 - \$2349	61	\$4050 - \$4099	5
\$600 - \$649	1,512	\$2350 - \$2399	69	\$4100 - \$4149	8
\$650 - \$699	1,224	\$2400 - \$2449	63	\$4150 - \$4199	4
\$700 - \$749	1,144	\$2450 - \$2499	37	\$4200 - \$4249	5
\$750 - \$799	954	\$2500 - \$2549	57	\$4250 - \$4299	7
\$800 - \$849	825	\$2550 - \$2599	44	\$4300 - \$4349	9
\$850 - \$899	782	\$2600 - \$2649	42	\$4350 - \$4399	4
\$900 - \$949	629	\$2650 - \$2699	34	\$4400 - \$4449	5
\$950 - \$999	590	\$2700 - \$2749	34	\$4450 - \$4499	7
\$1000 - \$1049	542	\$2750 - \$2799	29	\$4500 - \$4549	11
\$1050 - \$1099	489	\$2800 - \$2849	26	\$4550 - \$4599	5
\$1100 - \$1149	399	\$2850 - \$2899	31	\$4600 - \$4649	7
\$1150 - \$1199	378	\$2900 - \$2949	24	\$4650 - \$4699	7
\$1200 - \$1249	313	\$2950 - \$2999	17	\$4700 - \$4749	3
\$1250 - \$1299	328	\$3000 - \$3049	23	\$4750 - \$4799	2
\$1300 - \$1349	290	\$3050 - \$3099	25	\$4800 - \$4849	3
\$1350 - \$1399	238	\$3100 - \$3149	19	\$4850 - \$4899	5
\$1400 - \$1449	223	\$3150 - \$3199	25	\$4900 - \$4949	3
\$1450 - \$1499	236	\$3200 - \$3249	18	\$4950 - \$4999	4
\$1500 - \$1549	197	\$3250 - \$3299	18	\$5000 - \$4049	1
\$1550 - \$1599	182	\$3300 - \$3349	11	\$5050 - \$7499	77
\$1600 - \$1649	173	\$3350 - \$3399	22	\$7500 - \$9999	12
\$1650 - \$1699	148	\$3400 - \$3449	12	\$10000 - \$12500	1
\$1700 - \$1749	124	\$3450 - \$3499	7	OVER \$12500	1
Total					130,915

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c) Amount of CCB top ups in \$100 bands

AMOUNT OF TOP UP	Customers	AMOUNT OF TOP UP	Customers	AMOUNT OF TOP UP	Customers
\$0 - \$99	68,399	\$1750 - \$1799	91	\$3450 - \$3499	8
\$150 - \$199	15,263	\$1850 - \$1899	79	\$3550 - \$3599	8
\$250 - \$299	7,433	\$1950 - \$1999	79	\$3650 - \$3699	3
\$350 - \$399	4,192	\$2050 - \$2099	56	\$3750 - \$3799	4
\$450 - \$499	2,674	\$2150 - \$2199	52	\$3850 - \$3899	2
\$550 - \$599	1,799	\$2250 - \$2299	38	\$3950 - \$3999	3
\$650 - \$699	1,255	\$2350 - \$2399	37	\$4050 - \$4099	5
\$750 - \$799	965	\$2450 - \$2499	24	\$4150 - \$4199	2
\$850 - \$899	724	\$2550 - \$2599	20	\$4250 - \$4299	3
\$950 - \$999	585	\$2650 - \$2699	24	\$4350 - \$4399	1
\$1050 - \$1099	428	\$2750 - \$2799	15	\$4450 - \$4499	4
\$1150 - \$1199	332	\$2850 - \$2899	18	\$4550 - \$4599	3
\$1250 - \$1299	284	\$2950 - \$2999	16	\$4650 - \$4699	2
\$1350 - \$1399	209	\$3050 - \$3099	10	\$4750 - \$4799	1
\$1450 - \$1499	172	\$3150 - \$3199	10	\$4850 - \$4899	1
\$1550 - \$1599	173	\$3250 - \$3299	14	\$4950 - \$4999	3
\$1650 - \$1699	117	\$3350 - \$3399	9	\$5050 - \$7499	16
Total					105,665

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Output Group: 1.4 ChildCare SupportQuestion No: 46

Topic: Child Care Benefit Data

Hansard Page: CA210 Question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide the preliminary data that the Department of Family and Community Services collects on accessibility, affordability and waiting lists of Child Care Benefit?

Answer:

Accessibility

From September 2000 to June 2001 the number of children using child care increased by 6% from 642,000 to 677,000.

Since 1996 the number of child care services has increased by over 2,000, and the number of child care places by 194,000. The largest increase has been in outside school hours care places, up by 159,000.

Affordability

The Government doesn't set child care fees; however since the introduction of Child Care Benefit the Australian Bureau of Statistics, CPI figures (June 2000 to December 2001) show that nominal child care costs are down by 13.1%. Fee increases for centre based long day care have fallen from 8.5% per annum in 1996 to 3.8% in 2001.

Since the introduction of Child Care Benefit, the cost of care as a percentage of disposable income has fallen. For a low income family with one child in part time long day care, 30 hours a week, the out of pocket costs were 5% of disposable income in 2001, compared to 8% prior to the introduction of Child Care Benefit. For a low income family with one child in part time family day care, 30 hours a week, the out of pocket costs are now 1% of disposable income, compared with 4% prior to the introduction of Child Care Benefit.

Waiting lists

The Department does not collect data on waiting lists. Demand is monitored and responded to through a national planning system, the details of which are referred to in the answers to question number 33.

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Output Group: 1.4 Childcare Support

Question No: 47

Topic:

Hansard Page: CA212

Senator Bishop asked:

How many centres across Australia have received notice of overpayment of more than \$40,000 by name and location?

Answer:

Some services may regard the information provided here as commercially sensitive. Given there has not been time to seek their views on this matter, it is requested that this information be handled in a sensitive manner.

As at January 2002 the following services owed more than \$40,000.

STATE	NAME OF SERVICE
ACT	MAJURA EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE
ACT	JENNY WREN CHILD CARE CENTRE
ACT	YWCA FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
ACT	WODEN/WESTON CREEK FAMILY DAY CARE
NSW	FERNHILL ROAD PRESCHOOL
NSW	NEW WORLD CHILD CARE CENTRE
NSW	DAPTO CHILDRENS CENTRE
NSW	SOUTHPOINT KINDERGARTEN
NSW	EKIDNA KINDA
NSW	NOAH'S ARK DAY CARE CENTRE
NSW	HORNSBY TAFE CHILDRENS CENTRE
NSW	PARRAMATTA CITY PRE-SCHOOL AND CHILD CARE CENTRE
NSW	JILLY'S EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATIONAL
NSW	CHILD CARE CENTRE BOWRAL
NSW	NSW IN HOME CARE SERVICE
NSW	NARARA VALLEY DAY CARE
NSW	NEPEAN COLLEGE OF TAFE CHILDREN'S CENTRE
NSW	BLACKTOWN FAMILY DAY CARE
NSW	PITTER PATER PRESCHOOL
NSW	COOLAMON CHILDREN'S CENTRE
NSW	TINKERBELL PRE SCHOOL & LONG DAY CARE CENTRE
NSW	AMBER COTTAGE CHILDREN CENTRE
NSW	NORTHMEAD (REDBANK RD) CHILDREN'S CENTRE
NSW	MARGARET DRUITT DAY CARE CENTRE
NSW	MUFFINS LONG DAY CHILD CARE CENTRE (INCORPORATING

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NSW	FREEMANS REACH LONG DAY CARE CENTRE
NSW	NIPPERSVILLE CHILD CARE AND PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE
NSW	HILLS AFTER SCHOOL CARE
NSW	GOSFORD FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
NSW	BANGALAY CHILD CARE & EDUCATION CENTRE
NSW	EASTGARDENS KINDY
NSW	THE LEARNING TREE - GRAFTON
NSW	HILLSTON BILLYLIDS
NSW	MACQUARIE CHILD CARE CENTRE
NSW	PINJARRA CHILD CARE CENTRE
NSW	RIVER ROAD KINDERGARTEN
NSW	KIDS 'R' US PRESCHOOL CHILD CARE CENTRE
NSW	KINDY TIME DEE WHY
NSW	SUNNYSIDE KINDERGARTEN
NSW	LITTLE SAILS PRE-SCHOOL
NSW	STAY-N-PLAY EDUCATION & CARE CENTRE
NSW	GUMTREE GULLY LONG DAY CARE CENTRE
NSW	CALALA'S CUBBY EDUCATIONAL CENTRE
NSW	MISS LIZZIES KINDERGARTEN (NARELLAN)
NSW	POSSUMS PLACE KINDERGARTEN (WENTWORTHVILLE)
NSW	SQUIGGLES KINDERGARTEN
NSW	CLIPPER ROAD CHILDREN'S CENTRE
NSW	THE BEE'S NEE'S LAKEVIEW
NSW	TRISBOW PTY LTD T/AS ERMINGTON BEAR KINDERGARTEN
NSW	PINJARRA PRE-SCHOOL AT PYMBLE
NSW	DALEYS POINT LONG DAY CARE
NSW	LILLI-PILLI PRE SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN
NSW	HIPPO'S FRIENDS
NSW	WIZ KIDS CHILD CARE CENTRE
NSW	RAINBOW CHILD CARE CENTRE (BALLINA)
NSW	MAGIC KIDS - MARRICKVILLE
NSW	THE LEARNING TREE - LISMORE
NSW	DO-RE MI CHILD CARE CENTRE
NSW	BALLINA/BYRON BAY FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
NSW	ESTELLA CHILDCARE CENTRE
NSW	TIME 4 KINDY
NSW	BRISBANIA OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS - VC
NSW	WARILLA CHILD CARE CENTRE
NSW	BANANA CHILD CARE CENTRE
NSW	RUMPUS ROOM CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	CLEARVIEW CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	IPSWICH FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
QLD	BLINKY BILL'S CUBBY HOUSE

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QLD	ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRES - TARRAGINDI
QLD	ABC CHILDREN'S CENTRE
QLD	HERVEY BAY FAMILY DAY CARE
QLD	YOUNG DISCOVERERS PRE SCHOOL AND DAY CARE CENTRE
QLD	EDENS LANDING CHILDRENS CENTRE
QLD	TOOWOOMBA SOUTH FAMILY DAY CARE
QLD	CHERUBS CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	ROBINA PARKS CHILDREN'S CENTRE
QLD	ROBINA TOWN CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	KOOLYANGARRA CASUAL CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	ASHMORE CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	LITTLE PEOPLES CHILD CARE CENTRE - GOLD COAST
QLD	BURPENGARY MEADOWS CHILD CARE EDUCENTRE
QLD	ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE - (KALLANGUR 3)
QLD	SWEETGUM CHILDCARE CENTRE
QLD	WISHART CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	SWEETGUM CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	FRECKLES EARLY EDUCATION CENTRE
QLD	CAMELOT CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	GUMNUT HOLLOW - MORAYFIELD
QLD	KIN KORA EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE
QLD	KIDS AND HUGS KINDERGARTEN AND LONG DAY CARE CENTR
QLD	RUNCORN HEIGHTS EARLY DEVELOPMENTAL AND C
QLD	THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN
QLD	BALMORAL FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
QLD	ABC (KALLANGUR 2) DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRE
QLD	PEPPERCORN CHILD CARE CENTRE - ALGESTER
QLD	CEDAR AVENUE PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN
QLD	KINDER COTTAGE
QLD	GREMLINS CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	ANDY PANDY DAY CARE CENTRE PTY LTD
QLD	ALLENSTOWN CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	GOONDIWINDI AND DISTRICT FAMILY DAY CARE
QLD	PIED PIPER (KINGAROY) CHILD CARE AND DEVE
QLD	BROOKSIDE CHILD CARE & PRESCHOOL CENTRE
QLD	EAGLEBY CHILDREN'S CENTRE
QLD	OXENFORD CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	PEPPERCORN CHILD CARE CENTRE - CALAMVALE
QLD	NERANG CENTRAL CHILD CARE
QLD	THE MULBERRY TREE CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	BUNDABERG FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
QLD	HOLLAND PARK CHILD CARE CENTRE

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QLD	THE SOUTHPORT CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL CENTR
QLD	KIDS WORLD JUNIORS
QLD	BOWEN/COLLINSVILLE FAMILY DAY CARE
QLD	BROWNS PLAINS CHILD CARE CENTRE AND PRESC
QLD	KARALEE EARLY EDUCATION CENTRE
QLD	KRUGER CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING CENTRE
QLD	CAPTAIN KID CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	BRAMBLE BAY FAMILY DAY CARE
QLD	ATHERTON FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
QLD	TORQUAY CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	CALLUM EARLY LEARNING
QLD	ASPLEY KINDERGARTEN & PRE-SCHOOL
QLD	GORDONVALE CHILD CARE AND PRE-SCHOOL
QLD	EAGER BEES EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRE AND PR
QLD	WISHART PRESCHOOL AND CHILD CARE CENTRE
QLD	MT WARREN CHILDREN'S CENTRE 2
SA	MULTICULTURAL FDC SCHEME
SA	ABORIGINAL ACCESS FDC SCHEME
SA	METRO SOUTHWEST FDC SCHEME
SA	SOUTHERN DISTRICTS FDC SCHEME
SA	NORTHSIDE FAMILY DAY CARE_SCHEME
SA	EASTSIDE FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
VIC	CANBERRA AVENUE CHILD CARE
VIC	HANSEN STREET CHILDREN'S CENTRE PTY LTD
VIC	LITTLE PEOPLES PALACE CHILD CARE
VIC	KINDERWISE EARLY LEARNING CENTRE
VIC	FRANKSTON OCCASIONAL CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	WHITEHORSE FAMILY DAY CARE
VIC	HEATHERTON HILLS CHILD CARE & NURSERY SCHOOL
VIC	CRESWICK ROAD CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	BUSY BEE'S CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	KINGSTON FAMILY DAY CARE
VIC	CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE PTY LT
VIC	SHIRE OF YARRA RANGES FDC SCHEME
VIC	GEELONG MONTESSORI EDUCATION CENTRE
VIC	YESHIVAH BETH RIVKAH - AFTER SCHOOL CARE
VIC	SPRINGVALE CHILD CARE SERVICES
VIC	AUSTRALIAN TURKISH ASSOCIATION CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	TIGGERS
VIC	EARLY LEARNERS
VIC	SHIRE OF SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
VIC	TOP KIDS VERMONT
VIC	SHOLEM ALEICHEM PRESCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRE

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VIC	LA GARDERIE
VIC	ROSANNA VILLAGE CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE
VIC	EMPIRE STREET CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	PLAY AND LEARN CHILDRENS CENTRE
VIC	KIDS PARADISE CHILD CARE
VIC	GUTHRIE STREET CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	HOPPERS KINDERCARE
VIC	BAYSWATER CHILD CARE AND LEARNING CENTRE
VIC	TINY TAFES SHEPPARTON CHILDREN'S CENTRE
VIC	MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE FDC
VIC	KENNINGTON PARK CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	GIGGLES AND SQUIGGLES CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	NEW STREET CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	ALFREDTON CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	EDWARDES STREET CHILD CARE CENTRE
VIC	CRANBOURNE DAY CARE AND KINDERGARTEN CENTRE
WA	BALMAIN HOUSE CCC
WA	LOWER GREAT SOUTHERN FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
WA	KIDS ZONE CHILD CARE CENTRE
WA	WANSLEA FAMILY SERVICES GREAT SOUTHERN FAMILY DAY
WA	KOSY KIDS YOKINE VACATION CARE
WA	COMMUNITY VISION FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME
WA	TINY TOWN DAY CARE CENTRE
WA	WHITFORDS OSHC AFTER SCHOOL
WA	KIDZ KLUB CHILD CARE CENTRE - CLOSED
WA	CUDDLES CHILD CARE CENTRE BALLAJURA

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Output Group: 1.4 ChildCare Support

Question No: 45

Topic: CCB guidelines and instructions to services

Hansard Page: CA207

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide a copy of guidelines and instructions issued to services regarding CCB.

Answer:

Please find enclosed a copy of:

- the Private Operators Long Day Care handbook;
- the Child Care Benefit - Information to help child care providers – Workbook; and
- the Child Care Benefit – Statement for Payment – Workbook.

Please note that there is a separate Handbook for each specific type of child care service. However, the information regarding Child Care Benefit is similar for each service type.

[Note: attachments have not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

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ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2001-2002 Additional Estimates, 21 February 2002

Output Group: 1.4 Child Care Support

Question No: 28

Topic: Childcare Assistance (CA) Finalisation

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) Provide details of the total amount of money underpaid/overpaid to Child Care services under the Child Care Assistance program post-July 2000.
- b) How much has been recovered to date?
- c) How much has been paid to centres to date through the reconciliation process?
- d) What is the process for centres to appeal/query the amounts of any overpayments the Department is seeking to recover?
- e) What detail is being provided to centres about the periods and amounts for which money is being recovered?
- f) Please provide a schedule of the timing/location of reconciliations still to occur.

Answers:

- a) Final figures will be available at the end of the finalisation process.
- b) A total of \$1,143,607 has been received from Victorian services to date. Full details for all states will be provided when available.
- c) FaCS has paid a total of \$876,155 to services since February 2001. Prior to this Centrelink also paid positive adjustments resulting from the last two quarter acquittals by December 2000.
- d) Queries can be directed to FAO payment teams and/or FaCS staff. This information is included in the letters to services.
- e) Services are provided with details of the CA amounts advanced and claimed and the reconciliation result from acquitting the claim against the advance for each of the last two quarters.
- f) Services will receive a Childcare Assistance finalisation letter according to the following schedule:

Queensland	March/April 2002	TAS	April/May 2002
NSW	March/May 2002	NT	April/May 2002
SA	March/April 2002	ACT	April/May 2002
WA	March/April 2002		

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Output Group: 1.4 ChildCare Support

Question No: 48

Topic: Childcare Assistance (CA) Finalisation

Hansard Page: CA211

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

How many debts and/or overpayments exist in the old CCB (Childcare Assistance) scheme (in \$10,000 bands)?

Answer:

Final figures for Childcare Assistance will be available at the end of the finalisation process.

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Output Group: 1.4Child Care SupportQuestion No: 29

Topic: Data Collection

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) How does the Government intend to rectify the problems with information and data collection highlighted in the Productivity Commission Report on Government Services 2002 for the future?
- b) When was the decision made to pull the 2001 Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services and replace it with a collection on only Family Day Care services? Will the Department be attempting to provide information from the Centrelink administrative data to ensure that at least some data is recorded for the missing period?
- c) What planning has occurred to prepare for the May 2002 Census of Child Care Services, and are all services aware of this?
- d) What are all the current data collections (internal and external) managed or used by the Department and by Centrelink/FAO?
- e) In what format is Centrelink administrative data on child care assistance published? Please provide copies.
- f) What is the progress of plans for improving data collection, and compatibility of data across all jurisdictions and service types funded by the Commonwealth?
- g) Please provide a status report on the development and implementation of the Longitudinal Study on Children.
- h) Please provide an update on the development and testing of a National Minimum Data Set for children's services, and the Government response to the AIHW report on this matter.

Answer:

- a) The Department intends to conduct a full Census of Child Care Services in May 2002 to provide current data for the 2003 Report on Government Services and to fulfil program management requirements. Longer term data needs are being examined within the Department's child care data collection strategy which will be developed in light of current requirements and future directions such as the Children's Services National Minimum Data Set. The strategy will be completed later this year.
- b) The decision to defer the full 2001 Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services was made in April 2001 to reduce the administrative burden on services during the introductory year of Child Care Benefit. Centrelink administrative data is currently being used to provide usage information for customers and children in receipt of Child Care Benefit.
- c) Extensive planning has taken place and work is well underway in preparation for the May 2002 Census of Child Care Services. A detailed project plan was developed in October last year. To date, the questionnaire development process has been completed following testing

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the proposed forms in all States and Territories. Work has commenced on the development of the electronic form for Long Day Care services. Negotiations have commenced with the major Family Day Care software provider to have the 2002 Census questions incorporated into their software. System redesign has commenced and requests for tender have gone out for keying services and temporary staff to process the Census.

National child care peak bodies have been informed of the Census and preliminary notification letters about the Census will be sent to services in early April 2002. Information on the Census will also be contained in the March 2002 Child Care Newsletter.

d) The current data collections (internal and external) managed or used by the Department are the Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services (FaCS), the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Child Care Survey and Centrelink administrative data on Child Care Benefit approved services and customers.

e) Centrelink administrative data on child care is reported in the Department's Annual Report. Administrative data on child care is also published in the FaCS Statistical Overview of Customers.

f) The Commonwealth meets regularly with children's service's representatives from all State and Territory Governments, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Productivity Commission and the Australian Bureau of Statistics to develop the Children's Services National Minimum Data Set. The aim of the Data Set is to provide a set of key nationally comparable data items for child care and preschool services. Progress on establishing the Data Set is at answer (h). Also, the Department's child care data collection strategy, which will consider current and future data collection needs and directions such as the Children's Services National Minimum Data Set, will be completed by the end of 2002.

g) The base design for Longitudinal Study of Australian Children is focussed on data collection for the early years of children's lives. It will take as a starting point two cohorts of Australian children and track these children every two years from 2003 at least until 2009. At each of the data collection points for these cohorts, age appropriate developmental outcomes will be measured (including social, physical/mental health, development/learning, academic and risk-behaviour) and data collected on key factors influencing these developmental outcomes. Information on significant life events that may occur in children's lives and that can lift or depress a trajectory will also be collected; some of these events are planned (entry to school), others are not (separation of parents). This design allows children's developmental pathways in the early years to be observed and measured.

A preferred tenderer has been selected and contract negotiations have been ongoing since late 2001 with an announcement expected by end of March 2002. Throughout 2002, FaCS and the contracted researchers will work together to refine the survey design and develop the survey data collection instruments. The first wave of data collection will take place in mid 2003.

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h) The data manual for the first stage of the Children's Services National Minimum Data Set was finalised in October 2001 and is now ready for pilot testing. The Children's Services Data Working Group, which has responsibility for developing the National Minimum Data Set, will meet in Canberra on 20 March 2002 to progress planning for the pilot test with field testing proposed for July-August 2002. Many outcomes from the AIHW Report on the Field Testing of the Proposed Children's Services National Minimum Data Set have already been included in the revised data manual. The Department will be working towards resolving all issues within the framework of the Working Group in consultation with other member jurisdictions.

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Output Group:1.4 Child Care Support Question No: 30

Topic: Current Usage of Services

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide the most recently available data/information in the following areas, broken down by State/Territory for all Commonwealth funded child care related activities:

- a) Numbers of approved and registered services (by service type) receiving Commonwealth funding
- b) Places allocated by service type
- c) Places filled by service type
- d) Children assisted by service type
- e) Families assisted by service type
- f) Number of staff/carers by service type
- g) Number of openings and closures of services (by service type) by LGA/postcode

Answers:

- a) a) Numbers of approved and registered services (by service type) receiving Commonwealth funding

<i>Service Type¹</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>TAS</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>LDC</i>	1660	813	895	190	336	53	45	81	4073
<i>FDC²</i>	117	86	114	25	30	15	12	9	408
<i>ASC</i>	613	666	476	241	127	54	48	73	2298
<i>BSC</i>	463	407	293	196	59	17	8	35	1478
<i>VAC</i>	495	269	413	167	124	47	51	38	1631
<i>OCC</i>	46	25	16	3	12	4	1	4	111
<i>Total approved care</i>	3394	2266	2207	822	688	190	165	240	9999
<i>Registered care</i>	5481	4686	4437	1221	1208	414	233	610	19092 ³
<i>Total service providers</i>	8875	6952	6644	2043	1896	604	398	850	29091

1. LDC = Long Day Care, FDC = Family Day Care, ASC = After School Care, BSC = Before School Care, VAC = Vacation Care, OCC = Occasional Care, REG = Registered Care

2. FDC services include In-home Care services

3. Total registered care includes carers where their State is unable to be easily determined. To obtain this State breakdown would require a significant diversion of the Department's resources.

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b) Places allocated by service type

Operational Place by Service Type by State, June 2001

<i>Service Type¹</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>TAS</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>LDC</i>	64196	42156	55297	9904	13896	2355	1909	4096	193809
<i>FDC</i>	22371	16727	12547	5323	4772	3247	904	4949	70840
<i>ASC</i>	26653	28681	25110	10286	6640	1972	1837	3473	104652
<i>BSC</i>	14571	13750	9797	4850	2073	340	153	1539	47073
<i>VAC</i>	20739	15001	22965	8031	6636	1952	1750	1712	78786
<i>OCC</i>	1186	722	516	83	376	79	10	102	3074
<i>Total</i>	149716	117037	126232	38477	34393	9945	6563	15871	498234

1. *LDC = Long Day Care, FDC = Family Day Care, ASC = After School Care, BSC = Before School Care, VAC = Vacation Care, OCC = Occasional Care*

c) Places filled by service type

Utilised places¹ by service type and state

<i>Service Type²</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>TAS</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>LDC</i>	57712	35076	46837	7547	11881	1816	1697	3797	166993
<i>FDC</i>	16622	12428	9322	3955	3546	2413	672	3677	52635
<i>ASC</i>	16791	16578	14714	5565	5133	913	1286	2108	63088
<i>BSC</i>	7577	6531	4663	2425	1370	88	51	559	23264

1. *Utilised places is obtained by multiplying operational places (from b above) and service utilisation rates from the October 2000 utilisation survey (for LDC, ASC and BSC) and the August 2000 FDC utilisation survey. Vacation Care and Occasional Care were not surveyed in the Utilisation surveys conducted in 2000.*

2. *LDC = Long Day Care, FDC = Family Day Care, ASC = After School Care, BSC = Before School Care.*

d) Children assisted by service type

Children assisted by service type for June 2001 Quarter¹

<i>Service Type²</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>TAS</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>LDC</i>	124584	78367	113322	24894	35383	7789	2887	5737	392963
<i>FDC</i>	32842	30108	22698	10543	8948	5991	1073	2290	114493
<i>ASC</i>	33602	39056	33753	18772	7114	3374	1564	4417	141652
<i>BSC</i>	14885	13449	10677	7500	1817	468	56	1050	49902
<i>VAC</i>	23095	17498	24216	11053	7742	3005	1489	1687	89785
<i>OCC</i>	4597	3110	1814	301	1422	316	1	489	12050
<i>REG³</i>									31133

1. *Source: Centrelink administrative data*

2. *LDC = Long Day Care, FDC = Family Day Care, ASC = After School Care, BSC = Before School Care, VAC = Vacation Care, OCC = Occasional Care, REG = Registered Care*

3. *This is the number of children for whom registered care claims were lodged during the June quarter 2001. The breakdown of registered care children by State requested is not readily available. To obtain this data would require a significant diversion of the Department's resources.*

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e) Families assisted by service type

Families assisted by service type for June 2001 Quarter¹

<i>Service Type²</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>TAS</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>LDC</i>	105518	62340	85065	19959	27086	6104	2333	4806	313211
<i>FDC</i>	23796	19483	15175	6271	6200	3954	809	1650	77338
<i>ASC</i>	24427	26959	22837	12715	4857	2311	1127	3178	98411
<i>BSC</i>	11180	9257	7437	5208	1193	340	40	775	35430
<i>VAC</i>	15672	11545	15779	7099	4835	2001	1023	1159	59113
<i>OCC</i>	3821	2471	1443	242	1114	259	1	364	9715
<i>REG³</i>									25356

1. Source: Centrelink administrative data

2. LDC = Long Day Care, FDC = Family Day Care, ASC = After School Care, BSC = Before School Care, VAC = Vacation Care, OCC = Occasional Care, REG = Registered Care

3. This is the number of families who lodged a registered care claim during the June quarter 2001. The breakdown of registered care families by State requested is not readily available. To obtain this data would require a significant diversion of the Department's resources.

f) Number of staff/carers by service type

Numbers¹ of Staff and Carers by State

<i>Service Type²</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>TAS</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>CBLDC</i>	4930	3210	1972	1120	874	459	219	398	13182
<i>PLDC</i>	8557	5513	7641	948	2080	251	148	515	25653
<i>FDC – staff³</i>	605	275	368	136	115	62	23	35	1619
<i>FDC – carers³</i>	3653	2735	2655	1154	758	445	146	336	11882
<i>OSHC⁴</i>	2259	2261	1670	695	455	177	113	439	8069
<i>VAC</i>	2150	1519	1733	695	655	168	147	164	7321
<i>OCC</i>	318	248	144	56	107	31	7	22	933
<i>Total</i>	18819	13026	13528	3650	4286	1148	657	1573	56687

1. Source: 1999 and 2001 Child Care Census data, which have not been weighted to account for non-responding services.

2. CBLDC = Community based Long Day Care, PLDC = Private Long Day Care, FDC = Family Day Care, OSHC = Outside School Hours Care, VAC = Vacation Care, OCC = Occasional Care

3. All data in this table is from the 1999 Census of Child Care Services except for the data on Family Day Care staff and carers, which is from the 2001 Census.

4. Outside School Hours Care consists of After School Care and Before School Care services, which are combined for the purposes of the Census.

g) Number of openings and closures of services (by service type) by LGA/postcode

The data requested is not readily available. To obtain this data would require a significant diversion of the Department's resources.

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Output Group: 1.4 – Child Care Support

Question No: 31

Topic: Funding and Activities of Specialist Programs

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

Please provide a breakdown of program funding and number of services/children assisted for each of the following specialist programs:

- a) Special Needs Subsidy Scheme
- b) Supplementary Services Program
- c) Special Services Program Private provider incentives for long day care centres
- d) Disk incentive payment scheme (and number of services assisted)
- e) Disadvantaged Area Subsidy, and breakdown of number of long day care and Out of School Hours programs assisted

Answer:

a) Special Needs Subsidy Scheme

At 30 December 2001, 4786 children were being assisted in 3085 services. These numbers include children attending more than one service type. Some child care services also assist more than one child. SNSS expenditure for the 2000-2001 financial year was \$17.8m.

b) Supplementary Services Program

SUPS is available to Commonwealth approved child care services. The 1999 Census of Child Care Services reported that 90,100 children with additional needs were attending Commonwealth approved child care services. SUPS expenditure for the 2000-01 financial year was \$18.8m.

c) Special Services Program Private Provider incentives for long day care centres

There are 4 private providers receiving the Private Provider Incentive. These services offer 106 child care places and annual funding is \$1m.

d) Disk incentive payment scheme (and number of services assisted)

To the end of February 2002, approximately 5900 services have been paid and total expenditure is approximately \$7.8m.

e) Disadvantaged Area Subsidy

There are 150 Long Day Care DAS services which offer in excess of 4700 child care places. The annual funding for this program is \$5m.

There are 850 before school, after school and vacation care services receiving DAS. These services offer more than 23,700 child care places and the annual funding for this program is \$5.1m.

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Output Group: 1.4 Childcare Support

Question No: 32

Topic: PRIVATE/COMMUNITY/EMPLOYER PROVIDER SPLIT

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) How many private operators are now providing (a) family day care; and (b) Outside School Hours Care?
- b) How many employer sponsored child care centres are there, where are these located? How many families/children are assisted through these centres?

Answer:

- a) (a) There are no private family day care operators currently providing family day care.
(b) There are 114 private outside school hours care operators. Some private providers operate more than one service.

- b) The Department does not separately track or identify employer sponsored child care centres, nor does the Department separately track or identify families/children using employer sponsored centres.

Nevertheless, the Department's 1999 Census data identifies nationally 6 community based centres and 22 private centres in which employers have reserved 29 places and 425 places respectively.

Number of centres that offer employer sponsored child care places by State

<u>State</u>	<u>Community based</u>	<u>Private Operators</u>
NSW	3	10
VIC	2	7
QLD	-	5
SA	1	-

Employers have entered into a variety of child care delivery arrangements ranging through on-site centres, joint ventures on business premises, sponsored places in existing services and family day care places for shift workers. These arrangements are negotiated between the employer, the employee and the child care service.

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Output Group: 1.4 Childcare Support Question No: 33

Topic: Planning System

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) Please provide an updated copy of the document “Planning to Succeed in Child Care 2000” with list of identified demand for new places? Where is this updated information publicly available?
- b) Please provide an update on the activities of state based Planning Advisory Committees for the past 12 months (i.e. membership, number of meetings, results of deliberations)
- c) Please provide the source data from which “estimates of demand” are made for child care places nationally. Sources listed in Annual Report are: FaCS Child Care System; FaCS Healthwiz database; and National Supply Demand Models 1999, 2000, 2001.
- d) Who provides the analysis of this data and how is it presented to the Planning Advisory Committees for consideration?
- e) What is the normal process for approving the location and size of new centres?
- f) Does this take account of other child care centres in the surrounding area?
- g) Are there any incentives for child care operators to establish centres in low-income areas in metropolitan areas?
- h) What is the normal process for allocating new OSCH/FDC places amongst both existing and new services?
- i) What sort of waiting lists are kept at a local level, State and National level, and how are these waiting lists coordinated to ensure efficient management and administration of centres?

Answer:

- a) The document “Planning to Succeed in Child Care” is no longer produced in hard copy, but is now maintained on the Department’s website. It was last updated in November 2001. It no longer includes a list of areas where there is a demand for new places. Prospective operators are advised to contact the Department’s State and Territory offices to obtain information about the demand status of particular areas.
- b) Membership of Planning Advisory Committees (PACs) typically includes representatives from private long day care centres, community based long day care centres, family day care, outside school hours care and both State and local government. PAC meetings are usually chaired by the Department’s State or Territory Manager. In most States PACs met twice in the past twelve months – in May/June 2001 and November 2001. The PACs’ recommendations guided the identification of priorities for the subsequent allocation of available family day care and outside school hours care places.

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c) Data sources for national estimates of demand include:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics Census and intercensal information;
- Australian Bureau of Statistics Population Projections (if available);
- data from special needs groups including communities in rural and remote regions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Australian South Sea Islanders, children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, adults and children with a disability;
- Child Care Census and survey information conducted by the Department.

Other Australian Bureau of Statistics data include:

- Child Care Survey
- Parent's preference for care near home and near work;
- Parent's satisfaction with informal care
- Census District level data on children;
- Dwelling commencements - available monthly

These data may be supplemented by Commonwealth Government data from:

- Department of Education, Science and Training and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations;
- Centrelink;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission data (eg. ATSI population data rural and remote regions):

- d) The Department's State and Territory office child care planning staff analyse the national data and supplement it with State and local government data (where available) and their own local knowledge. Data is presented by planning region for consideration by the PACs.
- e) State and local governments are responsible for approving the location and size of new centres.
- f) See response to e.
- g) No.
- h) Areas that need new places are identified through the planning process. Available places are usually advertised. Applications are assessed and places allocated to the most suitable applicants.
- i) The Department is not responsible for waiting lists. Child care services maintain their own waiting lists.

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Output Group: 1.4 ChildCare Support Question No: 34

Topic: Family Day Care Schemes

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) Is there any provision in the FDC funding formula to take into consideration the number of carers within the scheme?
- b) Is the Government reviewing the FDC funding formula on a regular basis? Please provide details.
- c) What sort of policy or program support is provided by the Commonwealth to FDC scheme coordination units?
- d) What training and training materials are provided to schemes and carers and how is this information provided?
- e) Is there any special loading for FDC schemes in areas with high numbers of non-English speaking carers, or where care providers don't have pre-existing skills in running a small business? If not, what is the reason for this?
- f) Who provides insurance for FDC schemes? Who manages the risk? Given the increase in insurance premiums are there any plans to review the operational grants to FDC schemes?
- g) What monitoring of FDC schemes is there between accreditation periods?

Answer:

- a) Family day care services receive funding based on the number of equivalent full time places allocated for the first year of operation. For the second and subsequent years funding is based on their operational profile (i.e. average utilisation of places) rather than the number of carers contracted or employed by the service.
- b) All funding for child care, including family day care is monitored as part of the ongoing program administration and analysis. Family day care funding formula is subject to annual cost supplementation. Advice to Ministers concerning improvements to programs would be part of confidential briefing and policy advice.
- c) Each family day care service receives a handbook that outlines the service's roles and responsibilities. Family day care services can contact Departmental officers or Family Assistance Offices to seek support or clarification on policy issues. From time-to-time services receive written information about new or current policy issues.

Currently, all new family day care services receive start-up support in the form of one-off set-up, equipment and establishment grants, as well, services also receive operational subsidy funding paid monthly. Additional funding is available to eligible services for Regional Travel Assistance Grant, Supplementary Services, Special Needs Subsidy

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Scheme and Disabled Supplementary Payment. Other program support has been outlined in the answer to question 4.

The National Family Day Care Council of Australia, as the peak family day care group, was successful in a submission for funding in the current financial year to support their national conference. Funding of \$43 574 was approved to assist with participant travel costs, facilitator's fees and videoing of the conference.

- d) In-service training providers are contracted to deliver one-off training programs to Commonwealth approved child care services. The training complements advice and support provided by Commonwealth funded Resource and Advisory Agencies.

Training and the materials provided are in response to priorities identified by the Department and the training needs of different elements of the child care industry.

The Department, through the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) has provided the family day care sector with a number of training resources. Publications and a video have been forwarded to all family day care services to aid the implementation of quality assurance. The NCAC also provides a website with full details of the quality assurance system, the option to download the publications and on-line training for the quality assurance system.

The Department has also contracted, through an open tender process, for the development of a training package and resources to complement the publications and materials provided by the NCAC. This training package and associated resources allow for self-paced as well as face-to-face learning modes and the packages will be rolled out from April 2002.

- e) Family day care services do not receive a special loading for high numbers of non-English speaking carers. Services receive operational subsidy funding to assist the service recruit, train, support and monitor the care provided. Each service develops training for carers based on individual or specific requirements.
- f) The National Family Day Care Council of Australia (NFDCCA) have an insurance product called NFDCCA National Insurance Plan, that is available to Commonwealth funded family day care services. Services accessing their insurance elsewhere would need to check the conditions with that particular insurer.

Insurance issues including risk management is between the insurer and the policy holder. There are no plans to review the operational grants given to family day care services.

- g) The family day care quality assurance system was only implemented in July 2001 and the process has just commenced being rolled out. The first family day care services are not due for accreditation until later this year.

It is proposed that once the quality assurance system has been implemented, family day care services will conduct their own self evaluation in between accreditation reviews, to assess the status of their quality practices and to determine areas of practice that may be improved.

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Output Group: 1.4 ChildCare SupportQuestion No: 35

Topic: Special Needs Subsidy Scheme (SNSS)

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) Why is this payment not subject to CPI increases, in the same way as the CCB?
- b) How does this policy of limiting/capping assistance for subsidising high needs children fit with the Government policy imposed on services to work under “priority of access” guidelines?
- c) What projections does the Department have for future demand for SNSS subsidised places across the different service types?

Answer:

- a) SNSS is a subsidy based on the median wage for a level 2 child care worker across all States and Territories. It was not designed to cover the full cost of each additional worker. In order to respond to demand for access to SNSS additional funding was directed to meet growth in the Scheme.
- b) The introduction of CCB in July 2000, and subsequent indexation of CCB, has provided services with additional funding and enabled services to offer more affordable child care and increase their utilisation.
- c) The Government regards children at risk of abuse or neglect as the foremost priority for access to quality child care. The priority of access (POA) guidelines are applied by child care services when filling vacant places. Children who may be eligible for SNSS still need to be considered under the POA guidelines, where demand exceeds supply. While SNSS assistance is limited in terms of the hourly subsidy rate, resources have been targeted to allow for growth in the number of children assisted.

There has been significant growth in SNSS across service types. Trends are indicating that demand will plateau.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care Support

Question No: 42

Topic: Special Needs Subsidy Scheme (SNSS) level of subsidy

Hansard Page: CA215

Senator Bishop asked:

How many complaints or requests for review have been received about the amount paid to special needs providers in Child Care Centres?

Answer:

Some peak groups have identified concerns relating to SNSS in discussions with the Department. Since 1 July 2001 we have received approximately 100 letters from concerned parents and child care services in relation to the \$13 per hour subsidy. The majority of these letters were prepared form letters.

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Question No: 36

Topic: Other Issues for Services

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) Please provide a breakdown of what services have received this program and how much they have received?
- b) Have any provisions been made to assist services that missed out on receiving the Disk Incentive Payment of \$1500 to help with their technology needs?
How many services missed out on this payment and are they now able to work within the electronic submission scheme required under the CCB program?
- c) Insurance: has the Dept considered how increased insurance premiums will affect the child care sector? Are there any plans to assist providers with managing the expected increased overheads?
- d) Is the department undertaking any analysis of future trends in the sector and the possibility of providing capital grants for new child care centres to meet unmet demand?
- e) With increasing numbers of high needs children being identified and assisted in the child care sector, has the Government been undertaking any reviews of the overall funding formula and specific programs for assisting high needs children and their carers?

Answers:

- a) A range of services are funded through the Special Services Program including mobile child care services, Aboriginal playgroups, Enrichment programs, Ethnic support agencies and toy libraries. Funding for special services programs is not separately identifiable.
- b) The Disk Incentive Payment (DIP) program was originally announced in mid 2000.

A letter was sent to all services on 17 September 2000.

Services were advised that the payments would be made in two instalments – to be eligible for the payments, services had to lodge two successful Child Care Benefit Statements for Payment disk lodgements between 1 July 2000 and 31 July 2001.

The final deadline for lodgement of disks (and thus eligibility for the Disk Incentive Payments) was later extended to 30 September 2001. Services were advised of the extension of time by a Special Edition of “Child Care News” in April 2001. Some deadlines for lodgement of particular claim periods were introduced at that time to encourage services to lodge their Statements for Payment by disk in a more timely manner.

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The response to the Program was very positive and approximately 5,900 services have lodged claims and been paid. Payments since July 2000 total approximately \$7.8 million.

It is considered that a significant period of time was available to services to lodge disks and seek payment of the Disk Incentive. Services are no longer able to claim for the payments unless they had lodged disks successfully by the required deadlines.

Services may have been unable to take advantage of the Disk Incentive Program because: they lodged some/all of their Statements for Payment on paper (not electronic disk); or they did not meet the Disk Incentive Program deadlines set for particular claim periods. Also, some services may not have wished to take advantage of the scheme.

Services which did not make a claim are still able to work within the electronic submission scheme required under Child Care Benefit program.

- c) The Department is monitoring the impact of increasing insurance premiums on the child care sector.

The ACCC are currently investigating recent changes in the insurance market and is due to report in March 2002. The Department will consider findings from this report when it becomes available.

A public consultation process to examine insurance issues is being established by Assistant Treasurer Helen Coonan. The Department has written to Assistant Treasurer Helen Coonan to seek community sector involvement in the public consultations to discuss insurance increases.

The Department is currently investigating options for insurance arrangements (eg. brokerage or pooling) to identify more competitive premiums for community organisations.

- d) No
- e) General monitoring and analysis of a program's effectiveness is part of the ongoing administration of a program. Advice to Ministers concerning improvements to programs would be part of confidential briefing and policy advice.

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Question No: 37

Topic: Employment/industrial issues

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) As part of their program management role, can the Department provide details of any work they are undertaking in analysis of the industrial issues currently facing the child care sector, particularly those related to wages and conditions of Family Day Care providers?
- b) What figures, either from internal or external sources, does the Department have which identify retention rates of staff in the child care field?
- c) Is the Department undertaking any policy development or professional development work around the recruitment and retention rates of staff in the child care sector?
- d) What is the formal training program provided by the Department or any of its agencies in both the formal and informal child care sectors?
- e) What specialist training is provided/available to those workers dealing with children with special needs or that are allocated places under the "priority access guidelines"?
- f) What proportion of the budget is dedicated to training and professional development, both for mainstream and special needs child care workers?

Answer:

- a) The Department continues to monitor industrial issues, particularly those that impact on policy initiatives implemented by the Department, including Family Day Care.

The Department is working cooperatively with State and Territory governments to consider workforce planning issues. The Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council conducted research and consultations on these matters in developing its report, *Child Care: Beyond 2001*.

- b) The Department does not have any figures available to indicate retention rates. There is anecdotal evidence of a shortage of qualified staff in Children's Services through licensing exemptions, shortages in rural and isolated services, relief staff issues and high turnover of staff in some sectors. At this stage no jurisdiction is able to quantify nationally the staff shortages across all sectors of children's services.
- c) The Commonwealth is working cooperatively with State and Territory governments, through the Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council, to further explore workforce issues for child care and preschools and to consider how to address these issues.

The Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council has recommended ways of improving the status and standing of children and child care in *Child Care: Beyond 2001*.

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- d) In-service training providers are contracted, by the Department, to deliver one-off training programs to Commonwealth approved child care services. The training complements advice and support provided by Commonwealth funded Resource and Advisory Agencies. Training and the materials provided are in response to identified priorities and the training needs of different elements of the child care industry.
- e) Supplementary Services workers assist Commonwealth approved child care services to increase their skills in facilitating developmentally and culturally appropriate programs for children with additional needs.

Funding is available under the Special Needs Subsidy Scheme for workers to undertake specialist training for children with ongoing high support needs.

Child care services may obtain support and advice from Resource and Advisory Agencies in identifying children under the priority of access guidelines.

- f) For in-service training, the proportion of the broadband expended for the 2000-01 financial year was approximately 1.35% (\$2,159,029).

Under SNSS, funding is available for child care workers to attend specialist training on the inclusion of children with ongoing high support needs. Funding is provided at the rate of \$13 per hour, for up to a maximum of 15 hours. This expenditure is not separately identifiable from the total SNSS expenditure.

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Question No: 61

Topic: Department Performance

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

1. Program management
 - a) Provide breakdown of expenditure across national office and state offices
 - b) Provide breakdown of expenditure on staffing across national office and state offices
 - c) What was the \$2.8m overspend in this area in 2000-01 for?
 - d) Can the Department provide copies of all agreements with external parties (ie. Centrelink, Health Insurance Commission, and Australian Tax Office).
 - e) Where have savings been made for the \$10m decrease in spending this financial year?
2. When funding rounds for child care were advertised (including Stronger Families and Community Strategy and AWT initiatives) during the last financial year, where were information sessions held? (Breakdown of Capital cities, outer metropolitan areas and regional areas)
3. Please provide detail of numbers of applications received from areas where there were briefings held compared to those with no briefings.
4. Policy advice
 - a) What policy documents were produced by the Department?
 - b) What reviews have taken place?
 - c) Where have the savings been made in the nearly \$1.5m decrease in funds for this area in the current years budget?
 - d) What policy advice or developmental work has been done to support the Minister's and Prime Minister's recent statements around this Government having a strong focus on helping disadvantaged children (Sunday Telegraph interview 23/12/01)
 - e) What other work around the "early childhood" agenda has the Dept been undertaking?
 - f) Are there any specialist staff or section in the Department that focus on Children's health and well being issues? If so, how many?
 - g) Given recent comments from the Government regarding "social immunisation" and the importance of early intervention for addressing the developmental needs of children and young people:
 - What work has the Department of Family and Community Services done to determine need in this area?
 - What sort of programs are being developed and how will they be delivered?
 - Where and what is the target population?
 - How does this fit in with the prevention/early intervention work being undertaken in the Family & Community Services portfolio?

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- h) What is the Department's involvement in addressing issues related to children in the Government's "National Health Plan for Young Australians", particularly the issues relate to prevention/early intervention initiatives for children?
5. Research and evaluation
- a) Please provide copies of all research and program evaluations undertaken in the last financial year (the annual report only reports on four major pieces of work).
- b) What is the current year program of research and evaluation and what is the status of current projects?
6. Service delivery (Centrelink)
- a) Provide breakdown of expenditure.
- b) The Annual Report makes reference to "difficulties encountered in obtaining some reports and subsequently measuring whether the services and targets were provided to the required standards in 2000-01" (p.86). What reports is the Department referring to and what information did they contain?
- c) The Annual Report refers to 195 debts totalling \$2.22m – what was the nature of these debts? Does this figure also contain "overpayments" to services which have subsequently been recovered?
7. Service delivery – other (\$14.5m)
- a) Please provide details of what services were provided and by whom
- b) Where have savings been made for the \$6.5m decrease in this area for the current financial year?

Answer:

1. Program management

- a) A breakdown of expenditure across national and state offices is as follows:

	2000/01 Budget \$'000	2000/01 Actual \$'000	2001/02 Budget \$'000
<i>Total Allocation</i>			
National	12,454	13,552	9,827
State offices	17,624	19,364	13,161
	30,078	32,916	22,988

- b) A breakdown of expenditure on staffing across national office and state offices is as follows:

	2000/01 Budget \$'000	2000/01 Actual \$'000	2001/02 Budget \$'000
National	6,522	6,759	6,717
State Offices	10,348	10,723	10,657
	16,870	17,482	17,374

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- c) There was no overspend in program management expenditure in 2000-01. The difference between the budget allocation and actual expenditure was an underspend of \$2,838,000.
- d) A copy of each signed agreement for all Family Assistance Office services with the Health Insurance Commission and the Australian Taxation Office is provided. The agreement with Centrelink for the Family Assistance Office services is contained in the Business Partnership Agreement jointly produced by the Department of Family and Community Services and Centrelink.
- e) The decrease of about \$10 million from \$32,916,000 in expenditure in 2000-01 to a budget allocation of \$22,988,000 for 2001-02 reflects the move from implementation of Child Care Benefit to management of Child Care Benefit. The management of Child Care Benefit requires less resources following the implementation of the program.
2. As part of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, an In-home care briefing was held in the ACT.
3. The number of In-home care applications received in each state and territory is as follows:
- | | | | |
|---------|----------|---------------|---------|
| ACT – 5 | NSW – 40 | Victoria – 13 | SA – 2 |
| NT – 2 | Tas – 3 | Qld – 31 | WA - 18 |
4. Policy advice:
- a) and b) Various internal policy documents are developed and reviewed regularly. These documents are developed in the context of in-confidence advice and briefing to the Ministers and therefore cannot be publicly disclosed.
- c) The movement from development of policy concerning the introduction of Child Care Benefit to ongoing management of Child Care Benefit is less resource intensive. The decrease in expenditure of nearly \$1.5 million (from \$4,876,000 in 2000-01 to a budget allocation of \$3,406,000 in 2001-02) reflects this change.
- d) The cross-agency Taskforce on Child Development, Health and Well-Being has been considering ways for the Commonwealth to give better focus to early childhood and children's issues and for existing and new programs to better interact. The work of the Task Force is expected to build on existing work with an early intervention focus, some examples of which are outlined below. The cross-portfolio focus, while not new, will be given greater emphasis.
- e) FaCS has been reviewing and developing the case for early years investment. For example, FaCS commissioned The Centre for Community Child Health to prepare the background paper "A Review of the Early Childhood Literature" in February 2000.
- f) There are no "specialist" positions in the Department to work on these issues and the work is undertaken across the Portfolio. The Family Policy Branch provides secretariat support to the Taskforce and currently approximately 2 ASL is dedicated to drawing early childhood issues together.
- g) FaCS oversees a range of prevention and early intervention activities and programs in the early childhood and family policy arena. The Stronger Families and Communities Strategy (SFCS) includes major components of early intervention, parenting and family relationship support (\$47.3m over four years).

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A number of targeting methods are used in the various programs administered by FaCS. Within the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, state and territory targeting plans identify disadvantaged communities (of interest and location) that could benefit from the Strategy. These plans have been developed on the basis of demographic and ABS Social and Economic Indicators for Areas and will be updated over time. Most projects are in targeted communities. To ensure that the Strategy is responsive to local needs State and Territory Advisory Groups, comprising local level family and community experts, make recommendations to the Minister on project funding as well as communities that could benefit from the Strategy. The Stronger Families and Communities Partnership advises the Minister on the implementation of the linked initiatives of the Strategy including on targeting frameworks, national projects and performance management and evaluation.

Services funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy include those providing support, education, information and advice for parents and carers to enhance their parenting skills; playgroups; relationship education services; and family counselling in regional communities as well as a range of community strengthening activities. These services are developed and delivered locally to ensure that local communities' needs are met. Early Intervention Parenting Projects administered by the Family Relationships Branch provide support for parents with the aim of preventing child abuse. Activities include parenting courses, home visits by professionals and volunteers, establishment of playgroups, outreach services and other forms of family support. This program specifically targeted indigenous families, families from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and families in rural and remote areas. The Indigenous Parenting and Well-being Program, part of the Government's response to *Bringing Them Home* focuses on appropriate support for indigenous families.

The Stronger Families and Communities Strategy specifically targets families with very young children, families living in remote areas, young people who could benefit from leadership opportunities, especially in rural and regional Australia, communities facing challenges and indigenous and multicultural families and communities.

Early intervention is a key feature of FaCS work across all areas, including early childhood.

- h) The national "Health Plan for Young Australians" was an initiative of the (now) Department of Health and Ageing, which was completed in June 2001. FaCS had minimal involvement in the initiative. Details of a new AHMAC working party on child health may be requested from the Department of Health and Ageing. Attention is now being given to joint work in the area of child development through the cross agency Taskforce on Child Development, Health and Well-Being, mentioned above.

5. Research and evaluation

- a) Copies of the following research and program evaluations undertaken in the last financial year are provided:
- (i) The Consumer and Provider Opinion Survey
 - (ii) Quality Assurance Model and Measurement Tools for Family Day Care
 - (iii) Utilisation surveys of Long Day Care Centres and Outside School Hours Services

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(April and August 2000)

(iv) Telephone survey results (August 2000)

(v) Family Day Care Survey (April and August 2000)

(vi) Capital Funding Arrangements

b) The following work has been completed this financial year:

- A survey on child care fees (August 2001): The survey was conducted by Datacol Research to provide an indication of the effect of the Child Care Benefit on child care fees.
- A cost impact analysis for quality assurance in outside school hours care (OSHC). A review of the impact of four approaches for implementing quality assurance in outside school hours care was conducted by KPMG. The final report was received in December 2001 and will inform the implementation model for quality assurance in outside school hours care.
- The Child Care Advisory Council release a report on *Child Care: Beyond 2001* in September 2001.

The Department is currently undertaking a range of other research and projects on aspects of child care, including the following:

- Child care demographics;
- Incentives/disincentives to workforce participation;
- Family choice survey; and
- Cost of child care.

6. Service delivery (Centrelink)

- a) This is funding provided to Centrelink to deliver the Child Care Benefit elements of their Family Assistance Office business. It includes staffing and systems costs as well as administrative overheads. It is not possible to provide a further breakdown.
- b) This refers to reports under the management reporting framework, developed as part of the implementation of the new Child Care Benefit payment. These include reports on Performance Indicators and Management Information.
- c) The 195 debts referred to in the 2000-01 Annual Report are compliance debts resulting from reviews undertaken at closure of services and as a result of tip-offs received from the public. These overpayments are not related to the advance/acquittal cycle. Recovery of these debts is pursued according to the normal Centrelink guidelines.

7. Service delivery –other (\$14.5m)

- a) The relevant services, which were provided by the Health Insurance Commission, involved administering the payment of Childcare Rebate at the Family Assistance Office.

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- b) The apparent savings reflected the fact that the Childcare Rebate scheme only operated for half of the financial year in 2000-2001, with no further rebate claims able to be made after 31 December 2000.

[Note: attachments have not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

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Output Group: 1.4 ChildCare SupportQuestion No: 39

Topic: Child care sector – policy advice

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) What peak groups does the Govt fund or support, and how much funding does each of these groups receive (include Playgroups Association)? Please provide details of funding sources for each group.
- b) How much has been spent on activities to support the Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Committee (CCCAC) since it's establishment?
- c) What is the status of the CCCAC report released in Oct/Nov 2001? Who has this been distributed/released to?
- d) What work is currently being undertaken to respond to this report?
- e) When will the Government be releasing it's response to the recommendations made in this report?
- f) What is the status of the CCB Reference Group established in 2001? Please provide an update on its activities and plans for the future of this reference group.
- g) Does the Government have any plans to merge the Australian Council for Children and Parenting and the Child Care Advisory Council? If not, is it planned that both groups will continue in their current roles?
- h) Is the Government considering the establishment of an advisory body for its foreshadowed "early childhood agenda"?
- i) Is the Department currently working with any external bodies in developing this agenda?

Answer:

- a) The Australian Early Childhood Association (AECA) is the only peak early childhood group that receives ongoing funding.

Funding is provided to AECA to contribute to government policies affecting Australian families and communities, carry information between the government and the community on social policy issues and represent constituent's views. AECA are also funded to provide secretariat support for the National Children's Services Forum.

AECA receive approximately \$300,000 per annum for the period 2001-2004 (indexed annually).

Funding may also be approved on a one off basis for peak groups submitting proposals for individual projects. The Playgroup Council (Playgroup Association's peak body) received funding of \$1.73 m for the financial year 2000/01. The funding was provided to support existing playgroups and to help parents/communities to establish new playgroups.

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b) Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council expenditure:

	\$
1998/1999	342 523
1999/2000	703 270
2000/2001	551 470
2001-02 to date	170 821
TOTAL	1 768 084

c) The Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council report *Child Care: Beyond 2001* was released by the Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone on 28 September 2001.

Copies of the report were provided initially to people who had participated in the consultations which took place in developing the content of the report. The report is currently of being distributed to all other interested people, including academics and training organisations. A full copy of the report is available on the Council's web site and hard copies are available on request to the Council. The Council's newsletter, currently being sent to all child care agencies, advises that the report is available and how to obtain a copy.

d) The Government has asked the Council to undertake further research and consultations on issues flowing from the recommendations of *Child Care: Beyond 2001*. During February, the Council conducted a series of Roundtables in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Darwin and Adelaide to follow up on the content and findings of the report, especially with the people who contributed to the Council's work in developing the report, and to explore two specific issues:

- examining the child care aspects of a national vision for children and
- strategies to promote the valuable work of early childhood workers.

e) The Council will report to the Government by the end of March 2002 on the outcome of its further consultations and research. The Government will then consider its response to the overall work of the Council.

f) In response to problems arising from the implementation of Child Care Benefit in July 2000, the Department set up a Child Care Benefit Reference Group. This group comprised representatives from national peak bodies, Centrelink and the Department. The first meeting was held in March 2001 and since then two other meetings have been held in May and September 2001.

The reference group is still active and the next meeting is planned for later in March or early April 2002. The group continues to discuss matters pertaining to Child Care Benefit and members are consulted out of session on relevant issues.

g) The future role and structure of ministerial advisory councils is a matter for Ministers.

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- h) FaCS currently convenes a cross-agency Task Force on Child Development, Health and Well Being that is considering ways for the Commonwealth to give better focus to early childhood and children's issues and for existing and new programs to better interact. The Government has not signalled any intent to establish an advisory body.
- i) The Taskforce membership is drawn from Commonwealth departments and agencies. The Department continues to liaise with community and other organisations on a regular basis.

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Question No: 41

Topic: Research

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

Can the Dept provide details (outputs, timing, people surveyed/consulted) of all the Consultancies listed in Table 88 of the Annual Report related to Child Care:

a)	Arthur Anderson	45,358
b)	Datacol Research	5,845
c)	Datacol Research	13,500
d)	Datacol Research	65,114
e)	Deloitte Consulting	152,914
f)	Indigenous Model Consultancy	27,249
g)	KPMG	48,655
h)	McMillan Staff Development	268,386
i)	Morgan and Banks/TMP	116,079
j)	Newton Wayman Chong	81,700
k)	Orima Research	31,495
l)	Small Business Research Unit (VUT)	44,000
m)	Spice Consulting	71,369
n)	Spice Consulting	125,681
o)	University of Melbourne	46,701
p)	WACOSS	46,250
q)	Westwood Spice	72,360

Answer:

Initial	Consultancy	Outputs	Timing	People Surveyed/Consulted
A	Arthur Anderson	An evaluation report of the Childcare Hotline, a Change Management plan and the management of the transition process to a new provider.	September 2000.	Staff and Management of High Performance Health and Connect Interactive.
B	Datacol Research	A report on the rates of utilisation in Long Day Care and Outside School Hours Care for April 2000. This work formed the baseline for the survey of October 2000.	June 2000.	Staff and management of Long Day Care and Outside School Hours Care services.

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C	Datacol Research	A computer assisted telephone interview to determine the rates of utilisation in Family Day Care schemes, Long Day Care and Outside School Hours Care services for August 2000.	The survey was conducted in August 2000.	Staff and management of Family Day Care schemes, Long Day Care and Outside School Hours Care services.
D	Datacol Research	A report on the rates of utilisation in Long Day Care and Outside School Hours Care for October 2000.	The survey started in October 2000 and was completed in November 2000.	Staff and management of Long Day Care and Outside School Hours Care services.
E	Deloitte Consulting	A project plan and management process to assist with the lodgement of acquittal notices by services.	The consultants started on 17 April 2001 and finished on 30 November 2001.	Staff and management of Centrelink, Family and Community Services, software industry and Childcare industry Peak-bodies.
F	Indigenous Model Consultancy	Research including a literature search was conducted into appropriate models of child care service delivery into remote Aboriginal communities.	This was presented in June 2001.	Organisations consulted included a range of Indigenous communities, peak bodies and State Government.
G	KPMG	A report on the implementation of CCB.	The review was conducted during October 2000 and the report was delivered in December 2000.	Senior management of Centrelink and Family and Community Services.
H	McMillan Staff Development	Information workbooks and training videos, targeted at specific childcare types. Four versions were developed, they were designed for each childcare service type.	The work started in July and finished in September 2000.	Departmental staff and management of Centrelink, Family and Community Services; and National and State child care industry Peak-body representatives
I	Morgan and Banks/TMP	Management and development of quality assurance system in family day care and outside school hours care (OSHC).	Quality assurance in family day care implemented July 2001. Quality assurance system in OSHC under development.	Family day care and outside school hours care service providers and the sectors nationally through Peak bodies, associations and critical friends.

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J	Newton Wayman Chong	Reports and documentation on provider perceptions of quality in family day care and consumer perceptions of quality in family day care.	Project completed April 2001.	Family day care service providers and consumers.
K	Orima Research	Communication and marketing strategy to facilitate communication between child care service providers and Department. This strategy also allows targeting and streamlining of communication between service providers, sectors and consumers.	Research undertaken in May 2001. Final report produced in June 2001.	Various child care service providers including: long day care; occasional care; out of school hours/vacation care; and family day care providers.
L	Small Business Research Unit	Study of viability of small long day care centres in rural and remote areas. A research report and information report, <i>Guide for operators considering establishment of a small long day child care centre in rural and remote Australia</i> , was produced.	February 2000 to 30 June 2000.	Small child care centres (with 30 or less approved places), and parents using small child care centres in both rural/remote and other locations; interviews with National and State/Territory FaCS offices; focus groups with local government and child care industry peak bodies; and child care site visits in VIC, TAS, NSW, and WA.
M	SPICE Consulting	Managed public consultations to inform Child Care Advisory Council's Beyond 2001 Inquiry	Completed August 2000	Parents, child care workers, managers/directors/ owners, employers, related professionals, peak bodies, state and territory governments, tertiary affiliated, grandparents via 20,000 flyers, 140,000 brochure/ feedback forms, 1300 number, inter-active television broadcasts to 131 sites.
N	SPICE Consulting	Stage 2 consultations to gather additional information on key issues identified by the Child Care Advisory Council in its Beyond 2001 Inquiry	Completed June 2001	Case studies in nine communities including interviews and meetings with key individuals and groups relevant to the child care sector in each area.

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O	University of Melbourne	Developed an implementation model and a quality measurement tool for the quality assurance system for family day care.	Commenced in Aug 2000 and reports on the model and tools delivered Nov 2000.	Family day care service providers, stakeholders and consumers.
P	WACOSS	Research was conducted into the levels of demand for child care in the Dardanup/Capel region of Western Australia.	The research was completed in Nov 2000.	Organisations consulted included child care peak bodies, a selection of child care services in the region and local government.
Q	Westwood Spice	Report and analysis of various consultations and video conferencing about the proposed family day care quality assurance system.	Contract process ran from April-June 2001. Consultations were held in May 2001.	Family day care sector around Australia including rural and remote areas.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care Support

Question No: 40

Topic: Research and Consultancies – discretionary grants

Hansard Page: Written question on notice & Hansard CA146

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

Can the Dept provide details of the grant for \$489,698 listed as “Support Parent – Professional Partnerships in Children’s Services” - who received the money, what it was for, what the process was for its approval.

Answer:

Discretionary grants totalling \$489,698 were approved to the following:

Grant Recipient	Project	Amount
1. Australian Early Childhood Association	Biennial child care conference – travel for participants.	\$ 45000
2. Indigenous Social Development Institute Ltd	Training and support to child care workers in remote indigenous communities.	\$ 298374
3. Australian Early Childhood Association	Information Economy (supports AECA to offer affordable computer and Internet access to children’s services).	\$ 107400
4. Charles Sturt University	Longitudinal research into the effects of child care.	\$ 8556
5. National Family Day Care Council of Australia (NFDCCA)	Travel expenses and speakers fees for the NFDCCA national forum.	\$ 1868
6. Australian Early Childhood Association	Variation to original agreement (see no. 3).	\$ 3500
7. Centre for Community Child Health	Development of resources to assist service providers to work in partnership with parents.	\$ 25000
		Total \$ 489698

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Process for approval of discretionary grants:

- Receive and assess submissions against program priorities
- Offer grant
- Enter into grant agreement
- Release funds
- Monitor project/funding
- Acquit grant against reporting requirements.

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Output Group: 2.1 Housing Support Question No: 52 & 53

Topic: Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA)

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- Please provide a timeline for the renegotiations of the CSHA?

Senator Campbell asked:

- What is the timetable and process for renegotiating the agreement?
- Please provide a list of meetings scheduled for the renegotiation process to the Committee.

Answer:

The following meetings of Housing Ministers and Housing Ministers' Advisory Committee (HMAC) have discussed CSHA renegotiation issues:

- 22 March 2001 HMAC meeting in Sydney
- 24 April 2001 HMAC meeting in Melbourne
- 4 May 2001 Ministers' meeting in Darwin
- 20 September 2001 HMAC meeting in Darwin

At the Housing Ministers meeting in May 2001, Ministers endorsed the direction and development of work being undertaken by their Advisory Committee.

Future meetings scheduled are:

- 19 April 2002 Ministers meeting
- 29 August 2002 HMAC meeting
- 26 September 2002 Ministers meeting
- 27 March 2003 HMAC meeting
- 21 August 2003 HMAC meeting
- 11 September 2003 Ministers meeting

At the next Ministers meeting on 19 April, Ministers will discuss in more detail the negotiation of a new CSHA. The current agreement ends on 30 June 2003.

Senator Bishop asked:

- Please explain the operation of the efficiency dividend? Will an efficiency dividend apply to any new agreement?

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Answer:

Efficiency dividends, when announced in the 1996-97 Budget, were to apply to all Specific Purpose Payments of a running costs nature and not previously subjected to an efficiency dividend. The government wished to apply the same efficiency incentives to the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement as had been applied to the cost of delivering its own programs.

The Commonwealth State Housing Agreement was quarantined from the dividend for 1996-97 as the *Housing Assistance Act 1996* specified funding levels for that year.

A 4% dividend was applied in 1997-98, and since then a 1% dividend has been applied each year to the base funding of the CSHA. It does not apply to the tied programs within the CSHA (Aboriginal Rental Housing Program, Community Housing Program and Crisis Accommodation Program). It is calculated using the previous financial year's funding.

The efficiency dividend applies to each of the four years of the 1999 CSHA. Application of an efficiency dividend to a new CSHA is under Government consideration.

Senator Bishop asked:

- Will Commonwealth funding for the CSHA be maintained or is there an intention to seek savings under the new Agreement?
- Will the Government include GST compensation currently provided to the States in the new CSHA?

Answer:

Details on issues such as funding and GST compensation in a new CSHA are under Government consideration.

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- Please detail the performance framework that will be used as the basis for negotiating the new CSHA with States and Territories?

Answer:

The performance framework developed for the current 1999 CSHA consists of a suite of 11 national performance indicators to measure the key objectives, such as affordability and priority access to those in greatest need. These indicators are supported by information provided by States and Territories that indicate progress against the State-specific strategies outlined in their bilateral agreements. The performance framework that will be used in a new CSHA is under consideration.

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Output Group: 2.1 Housing Support

Question No: 51

Topic: AHURI Board: Representation for the Commonwealth

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) Please provide the reason(s) Mr Rod Nockles was appointed to the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute? What are Mr Nockles housing related credentials?
- b) What involvement, if any, did Mr Nockles have with Hill and Knowlton's work for Family and Community Services on the stronger Families and Communities Strategy?
- c) What is the total dollar value of contracts between Hill and Knowlton and the Department of Family and Community Services since Mr Nockles left the employment of Senator Jocelyn Newman?
- d) Please provide the current full five year forward estimates for each outcome, program and sub-program of the FACS portfolio?

Answer:

a) The AHURI Constitution outlines the processes for appointment to the Board and other aspects of the Board's functioning.

The Commonwealth Minister appoints 5 of the 10 member Board, namely the Chair, three independent members and Commonwealth Board member. No requirements for Board members are stated in the Constitution except that they represent States/Territories, the Commonwealth of Australia or are independent.

In December 2000, the then Commonwealth representative on the Board, Mr Jeff Whalan, resigned. The then Minister, Senator Jocelyn Newman, appointed Mr Nockles on the basis that he would serve the Commonwealth's interests well.

Mr Nockles was Senator Newman's Chief of Staff and had regular involvement in the housing aspects of the portfolio. Mr Nockles has been on the AHURI Board since February 2001.

b) Mr Rod Nockles was Director of Public Affairs at Hill and Knowlton and managed Hill and Knowlton's account with the Department of Family and Community Services for the SFCS Communications Strategy.

c) \$399,740.

d) The attached table summarises the budget estimates for the FaCS portfolio for 2001-02 to 2004-05, current as at the 2001-02 Additional Estimates. These estimates reflect assumptions about economic parameters (the unemployment rate, CPI, and Male Total Average Weekly Earnings), expected changes in customer numbers and the expected impacts of announced policy changes. Accordingly, the estimates are revised regularly as assumptions are refined in the light of emerging trends.

The forward estimates for 2005-06 will become available with the 2002-03 Budget.FaCS

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Forward Estimates of Administered Expenses (as at Additional Estimates 2001-02)

Item	Output Group	2001-02 \$m	2002-03 \$m	2003-04 \$m	2004-05 \$m
Outcome 1 Stronger Families					
Items Across Outcome 1					
Ex Gratia - Preserve benefits to DVA pensioners	1.0	0.514	0.527	0.541	0.553
National Secretariats - Outcome 1	1.0	0.674	0.683	0.691	0.698
Payments to Universities - Outcome 1	1.0	0.079	0.081	0.083	0.085
Sub-Total		1.267	1.291	1.315	1.336
Family Assistance					
Child Abuse Prevention	1.1	3.923	4.017	4.101	4.187
Family Adjustment Payment	1.1	0.350	0.020	0.000	0.000
Family and Community Network Initiative (a)	1.1	2.167	0.000	0.000	0.000
Family and Community Network Initiative (a)		0.000	2.405	2.456	2.471
Grants to Family Relationship Support Organisations	1.1	27.615	22.444	21.107	21.550
Indigenous parenting	1.1	2.038	2.082	1.862	1.901
<i>Services for Families LGA</i>		<i>2.160</i>	<i>2.191</i>	<i>2.223</i>	<i>2.273</i>
<i>Services for Families with Children</i>		<i>6.137</i>	<i>5.718</i>	<i>5.803</i>	<i>5.927</i>
Services for Families with Children - Sub-Total	1.1	8.297	7.909	8.026	8.200
Stronger Families & Communities (Output 1.1)	1.1	18.495	24.276	31.107	31.760
National Illicit Drug Strategy SPP	1.1	4.753	4.875	0.000	0.000
Services for Families SPP	1.1	0.360	0.366	0.372	0.376
Double Orphan Pension	1.1	2.057	2.129	2.189	2.229
Family Allowance	1.1	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<i>Family Tax Benefit A</i>		<i>8,267.884</i>	<i>8,537.803</i>	<i>8,656.346</i>	<i>8,869.745</i>
<i>Family Tax Benefit B</i>		<i>2,454.127</i>	<i>2,540.664</i>	<i>2,588.268</i>	<i>2,651.003</i>
Family Tax Benefit - Sub-Total	1.1	10,722.01	11,078.46	11,244.61	11,520.74
		1	7	4	8
Family Tax Payment	1.1	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Maternity Allowances	1.1	223.883	228.347	231.449	235.391
Sub-Total		11,015.94	11,377.33	11,547.28	11,828.81
		9	7	3	3
Youth and Students Support					
Reconnect (Youth Homelessness)	1.2	20.244	19.244	19.244	19.244
The Mentoring Marketplace	1.2	0.000	0.802	1.372	2.250
Youth Activities Services	1.2	6.601	6.698	6.797	6.943
Transition to Independent Living Allowance	1.2	0.000	0.897	2.560	2.560
Austudy Payment	1.2	262.583	270.787	280.610	286.091
Fares Allowance	1.2	1.095	1.095	1.095	1.095
Student Financial Supplement Scheme	1.2	159.233	159.119	159.119	159.119
Youth Allowance	1.2	2,222.987	2,295.452	2,320.911	2,328.919
Sub-Total		2,672.743	2,754.094	2,791.708	2,806.221

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Child Support

CSA Annual Approp'n to Cover Cheque Dishonours	1.3	0.802	1.675	1.686	1.686
Child Support s77 - Shortfalls in CSA Trust	1.3	0.043	0.078	0.080	0.080
Child Support s78 - Unexplained Remittances	1.3	0.002	0.004	0.004	0.004
Sub-Total		0.847	1.757	1.770	1.770

Child Care Support

Child Care Assistance	1.4	10.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Child Care - Eligible Parents Training	1.4	10.363	11.981	12.229	12.474
<i>Childrens Services Capital LGA</i>		<i>0.521</i>	<i>0.509</i>	<i>0.305</i>	<i>0.305</i>
<i>Childrens Services Current LGA</i>		<i>40.711</i>	<i>42.281</i>	<i>43.462</i>	<i>44.157</i>
<i>Stronger Families & Communities (Output 1.4)</i>		<i>4.292</i>	<i>4.844</i>	<i>4.939</i>	<i>5.043</i>
<i>Support for Childcare</i>		<i>128.447</i>	<i>132.947</i>	<i>135.809</i>	<i>137.957</i>
Support for Child Care - Sub-Total	1.4	173.971	180.581	184.515	187.462
Support for Childcare SPP	1.4	11.155	10.556	9.851	10.088
Child Care Benefit	1.4	1,186.160	1,297.742	1,402.935	1,512.423
Child Care Cash Rebate	1.4	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.000
Sub-Total		1,391.734	1,500.860	1,609.530	1,722.447

Total Stronger Families

15,082.54	15,635.33	15,951.60	16,360.58
0	9	6	7

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Outcome 2 Stronger Communities

Items across outcome

National Secretariats - Outcome 2	2.0	0.674	0.683	0.691	0.698
Sub-Total		0.674	0.683	0.691	0.698

Housing Support

Family homelessness Prevention and Early intervention pilot	2.1	0.669	1.384	0.713	0.000
National Housing Priorities	2.1	0.348	0.357	0.364	0.366
National Housing Research	2.1	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420
Supported Accommodation (Bill 1)	2.1	0.696	0.808	0.808	0.811
<i>CSHA - Community Housing Assistance</i>		<i>63.990</i>	<i>63.990</i>	<i>63.990</i>	<i>63.990</i>
<i>CSHA - Crisis Accommodation Assistance</i>		<i>39.655</i>	<i>39.655</i>	<i>39.655</i>	<i>39.655</i>
<i>CSHA - Housing Assistance Base Funding</i>		<i>833.575</i>	<i>824.189</i>	<i>725.230</i>	<i>716.031</i>
<i>CSHA - Indigenous Housing Assistance</i>		<i>91.000</i>	<i>100.000</i>	<i>101.000</i>	<i>101.000</i>
CSHA- Sub-Total	2.1	1,028.220	1,027.834	929.875	920.676
Social Housing Subsidy	2.1	2.130	2.130	2.130	2.130
Supported Accommodation (SAA Act)	2.1	162.256	166.881	170.388	173.967
Assistance For Housing - State Grants	2.1	2.750	0.000	0.000	0.000
Sub-Total		1,197.489	1,199.814	1,104.698	1,098.370

Community Support

Business and Community Sector Partnerships	2.2	5.193	2.502	2.454	2.504
Emergency Relief	2.2	26.414	28.107	28.783	29.531
Great Southern Rail Concessions (a)	2.2	4.384	2.726	2.795	2.864
Great Southern Rail Concessions (a)		0.000	3.349	3.604	3.879
GST Assistance Scheme	2.2	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000
Indigenous housing and infrastructure - expand the supply of healthy housing	2.2	0.500	2.500	3.000	3.000
National Research on Gambling	2.2	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500
Payments under s33 of FMA Act 1997	2.2	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070
Compensation Under the Defence Act 1946	2.2	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005
Stronger Families & Communities (Output 2.2)	2.2	19.319	16.618	16.591	16.939
Volunteer Management Program - Outcome 2	2.2	1.591	1.613	1.630	1.648
Extension of Fringe Benefits	2.2	170.857	178.054	184.426	190.663
Sub-Total		229.033	236.044	243.858	251.603

Total Stronger Communities		1,427.196	1,436.541	1,349.247	1,350.671
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Outcome 3 Economic and Social Participation

Items across outcome

National Secretariats - Outcome 3	3.0	0.674	0.683	0.691	0.698
Payments to Universities - Outcome 3	3.0	0.079	0.082	0.082	0.084
Sub-Total		0.753	0.765	0.773	0.782

Labour Market Assistance

Ex Gratia - Special Benefit - Full time courses	3.1	0.447	0.000	0.000	0.000
JET - payments for training	3.1	1.900	0.000	0.000	0.000
Payment to Voluntary Work Agencies	3.1	1.888	2.324	3.496	3.927
Personal Support Programme	3.1	0.000	30.682	39.308	53.468
WR Consultative Forum	3.1	0.400	0.400	0.000	0.000
Bereavement Allowance	3.1	0.915	0.939	0.952	0.982
Mature Age Allowance	3.1	376.608	412.530	385.910	288.446
Newstart Allowance	3.1	5,436.323	5,510.829	5,534.478	5,820.527
<i>Parenting Payment (Partnered)</i>		<i>1,424.730</i>	<i>1,360.455</i>	<i>1,332.079</i>	<i>1,304.118</i>
<i>Parenting Payment (Single)</i>		<i>4,127.208</i>	<i>4,368.115</i>	<i>4,726.672</i>	<i>5,016.512</i>
Parenting Payment - Sub-Total	3.1	5,551.938	5,728.570	6,058.751	6,320.630
Partner Allowance (Benefit)	3.1	370.951	388.470	322.704	198.850
Partner Allowance (Pension)	3.1	455.562	520.960	481.694	343.306
Pensioner Education Supplement	3.1	64.956	71.455	79.580	87.175
Special Benefit	3.1	135.966	174.329	213.877	252.374
Widow Allowance	3.1	392.004	445.577	503.169	557.516
Sub-Total		12,789.85	13,287.06	13,623.91	13,927.20
		8	5	9	1

Support for People with a Disability

<i>Disability Services Current LGA</i>		<i>1.297</i>	<i>1.337</i>	<i>1.377</i>	<i>1.418</i>
<i>Employment Assistance Grants</i>		<i>287.722</i>	<i>310.020</i>	<i>347.876</i>	<i>372.953</i>
Employment Assistance Grants - Sub-Total	3.2	289.019	311.357	349.253	374.371
Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement	(a) 3.2	501.391	0.000	0.000	0.000
Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement	(a)	0.000	410.764	418.978	427.359
Disability Support Pension	3.2	6,353.471	6,778.700	7,311.838	7,721.350
Mobility Allowance	3.2	67.740	75.556	82.239	88.501
Sickness Allowance	3.2	97.711	97.745	98.439	101.083
Wife Pension (DSP)	3.2	398.948	339.506	293.924	240.941
Sub-Total		7,708.280	8,013.628	8,554.671	8,953.605

(a) Provisional estimates apply from 2002-03.

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Support for Carers

<i>Carer Allowance Adult</i>		<i>317.134</i>	<i>367.679</i>	<i>419.888</i>	<i>474.355</i>
<i>Carer Allowance Child</i>		<i>317.721</i>	<i>341.012</i>	<i>364.632</i>	<i>387.229</i>
Carer Allowance - Sub-Total	3.3	634.855	708.691	784.520	861.584
Carer Payment	3.3	598.765	731.873	879.133	1,029.419
Sub-Total		1,233.620	1,440.564	1,663.653	1,891.003

Support for the Aged

Ex Gratia - Aged persons Savings Bonus	3.4	1.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
Ex Gratia payment for Retirement Assistance for farmers Scheme	3.4	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.000
National Information Centre on Retirement Investments	3.4	0.439	0.451	0.461	0.463
One off payments to Seniors (Bill 1)	3.4	10.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Age Pension	3.4	16,544.72	17,503.73	18,486.49	19,397.88
		5	2	6	1
Aged Persons Savings Bonus	3.4	26.164	0.000	0.000	0.000
Self Funded Retirees Supplementary Bonus	3.4	49.378	0.000	0.000	0.000
Telephone allowance for Seniors	3.4	22.500	23.000	23.700	24.200
Widow B Pension	3.4	60.630	44.059	32.043	22.503
Wife Pension (Age)	3.4	216.965	186.385	164.356	137.154
Sub-Total		16,932.41	17,757.62	18,707.05	19,582.20
		3	7	6	1

Total Economic & Social Participation		38,664.92	40,499.64	42,550.07	44,354.79
		4	9	2	2

Total Portfolio Administered Appropriations		57,571.52	59,850.92	62,066.05	
		9	5	0	

(a) Provisional estimates are amounts which are not current commitments, but do not have to be offset if Government agrees to the expenditure. These amounts have been included in the sub-totals and totals.

Items in italics denote components of the forward estimates which are not published separately in the Portfolio Budget / Additional Estimates Statements. These items are sub-totalled within the table.

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OUTCOME 2 – STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Output Group: Stronger Families & Communities Strategy

Question No: 50

Topic: Stronger Families and Communities Strategy

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) In October the Department provided Labor with a five-year forward estimate of funding ‘already committed’ and ‘still uncommitted’ under the sub-elements of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. Please provide an updated set of figures.
- b) Please provide an electorate by electorate breakdown of Stronger Families and Communities Strategy funding and projects, such as that provided for SAAP, ER and other programs in the Federal Electorate Profiles.

Answer:

a) See Table 1.

b) Provided is a breakdown of current Stronger Families and Communities Strategy projects and grants by electorate in five separate Tables.

Table 2

Community initiative projects within the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.

Table 3

Projects with national significance within the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.

Table 4

Grants funded under the 2001 International Year of Volunteers component of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy. Please note that grants made under the International Year of Volunteers ceased in 2001.

Table 5

National Volunteers Skills Program component of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.

Table 6

In-Home Childcare and Private Provider Incentive Child Care Services funding under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.

[Note: attachments have not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

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Output Group: 2.2 Community Support

Question No: 55

Topic: PETROL SNIFFING FUNDS/PROGRAMS

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) On 20 February 2001 the Prime Minister announced \$1 million for petrol sniffing. Is it correct that these were not new funds but funds from the money given to the Northern Territory Government in a deal to not overturn mandatory sentencing in the Northern Territory?
- b) Has this money has been allocated and expended? If so, when?
- c) Please provide a list of what organisations are receiving this money, how much, and the program details for each?
- d) When does this money run out?
- e) How much money has been spent on combating indigenous substance abuse on the case of petrol sniffing under the Government's "Tough on Drugs Strategy"?
- f) Is there any federal money being spent on specific programs to combat petrol-sniffing?
- g) In reference to an article in the *Weekend Australian* on November 24-25 2001 in relation to petrol sniffing problems at Pukatja in Central Australia it says:

"In April this year...five federal public servants from Family & Community Services arrived in Pukatja offering money for a petrol-sniffing diversion program. The corporation's committee members doubted anything would come of it but King encouraged them to persevere with a proposal. Eventually they were referred to another government department. 'I don't know what happened but we're still not being funded'."

Can you explain why five public servants visited this community, what the purpose was and what the results of the visit were?

- h) Is Pukatja is receiving any federal money to combat this problem? If not, why not?
- i) Please describe what sort of coordinated approach is being used to develop programs to combat petrol sniffing in Indigenous communities by the Federal Government?

Answer:

a) – f) and h) – i) These questions are a matter for the Health and Ageing Portfolio to answer.

g) Three officers from the Department of Family and Community Services and two officers from ATSIC visited Pukatja in April 2001 to discuss the possibility of establishing a Buddy Program project in the community.

Buddy Program projects are being established in a number of remote communities in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia. The Buddy Program aims to provide employment for people with a disability matched to 'buddies' and led by a project co-ordinator. The Program is funded through ATSIC's Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) and FaCS' Disability Employment Assistance Program. The Buddy Program is not designed to be a petrol-sniffing diversionary program, although participants may have a disability caused by substance abuse.

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The government officers visited three other communities on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara (AP) lands at the same time as Pukatja, for the same purpose. They met with town communities as well as representatives of the Anilalya Council. On the basis of these discussions and later feedback from the communities concerned, FaCS agreed to fund a Buddy Project at Iwantja. This is currently underway.

The Anilalya Council developed a proposal for a multi-purpose drop-in centre for petrol sniffers for Pukatja. FaCS is working with the Council on this proposal, including offering assistance in identifying possible funding sources. The Buddy Program will not be a funding source as it focuses on creating employment opportunities.

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Output Group: Cross Output 3 Economic and Social Participation Question No: 59a

Topic: PROGRESS OF AWT IMPLEMENTATION

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide an update on developments under the AWT initiatives.

Answer:

- The Government has put considerable effort into conducting extensive consultations on the implementation of the AWT measures.
- Work is continuing in the Department of Family and Community Services, Department of Employment Workplace Relations, Department of Employment, Science and Training, the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commission and Centrelink to meet implementation deadlines.
- The request for submission for the Personal Support Programme was released on 6 February 2002. Applications close on 2 April 2002 and it is expected that provider applicants will be notified of outcomes by mid May 2002. The Personal Support Programme will commence on 1 July 2002.
- Development of the necessary Centrelink information technology systems, recruitment and training is on schedule. This will be assisted by the \$19.7 million provided to Centrelink through Additional Estimates.
- Legislative drafting is almost finalised. We expect to introduce the AWT legislation into the Parliament during the Autumn Sitting.

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Output Group: Cross Outcome 3-Economic and Social Participation Question No: 59b

Topic: Australians Working Together

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Who has been consulted about the new programme and what has been their feedback? What problems did these stakeholders anticipate?

Answer:

Consultations have been undertaken with community and peak groups, service providers, relevant state and territory Government organisations and interested individuals. Focus groups were also held with affected individuals.

A report on the consultations has been provided to the Minister for her consideration.

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Output Group: Cross Outcome 3 Economic and Social Participation Question No: 59c

Topic: PROGRESS OF AWT IMPLEMENTATION

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Who will determine eligibility of access, the service provider or Centrelink?

Answer:

Eligibility for access to services will be determined by the type of service to be provided. Service providers include:

- Commonwealth Government service providers – including Centrelink and the Child Support Agency;
- State and territory government service providers – including housing, state mental, medical and legal authorities;
- Large non-government service providers who typically have a presence in most states and territories and are contracted by Government to deliver a range of services including employment and family and community services; and
- Small non-government service providers that may employ only a couple of full time staff and rely mostly on volunteers – including local neighbourhood houses, youth shelters and soup kitchens.

In general Centrelink will refer customers to services using a variety of assessment tools such as JSCI/JSA and Personal Advisers. Centrelink is to be the major gateway to participation support and to the integrated social support system, including many of the Commonwealth funded services accessed by Centrelink customers, such as the Job Network, Personal Support Program and others.

This means that Centrelink has a key role in assisting people to increase their independence through:

- Assessing their problems and barriers;
- Providing information, advice and encouragement to participate; and
- Referring them to appropriate specialised forms of assessment and services.

Centrelink's Personal Advisers (PAs) will have a major role in identifying customer's barriers to economic and social participation and assisting them to address those barriers. This includes referrals to relevant service providers. Where necessary, other Centrelink specialists, such as occupational psychologists, will also assist.

The service providers themselves will make decisions about the customer's suitability for their service. These decisions will depend upon a range of factors including length of waiting lists. Service providers will have the capacity to refer customers back to Centrelink for possible reassessment where the provider feels that the referral was inappropriate.

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Output Group: Cross Outcome 3 Economic and Social Participation Question No: 59d

Topic: Australians Working Together

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

How many places will be made available under the first year (02-03) of the Personal Support Programme? How many places will be available in each of the out years after 02-03?

Answer:

On 1 July 2002 there will be around 16,000 Personal Support Programme (PSP) Places allocated nationally to PSP providers within Employment Service Areas (ESAs). By the end of the first year of PSP (2002-03), it is estimated that 17,500 Places will be allocated nationally.

Over the course of the next three years, the number of PSP Places is estimated to grow to the following levels:

Year	Number of Places	Number of Participants
2002-03	17,500	25,000
2003-04	23,750	35,000
2004-05	31,250	45,000

During the year a place may be used by more than one person. This will occur where individuals exit the Programme before the end of two years and are replaced with new participants.

The number of PSP Places released over the next three years may vary, depending upon the flow of participants through the Programme.

PSP funding is directed to providers on the basis of participants rather than places.

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Output Group: 3.2 – Support for People with a Disability

Question No: 56

Topic: Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

1. Please provide a timeframe for the renegotiation of the CSDA
2. Will Commonwealth base-funding for the CSDA be maintained at current levels or is there an intention to seek savings under the new Agreement?
3. What evidence or performance material does the Commonwealth have about changes in the extent of unmet need as a result of the injection of additional Government funding?
4. Is it the Commonwealth's view that the additional funding for unmet need under the last two years of the CSDA has addressed these needs?
5. Will the Government continue to provide unmet needs money over the life of the new agreement or were these funds a one off?

Answer:

1. Disability Ministers have agreed to renegotiate the CSDA by 1 July 2002.
2. The renegotiation of the next Agreement will include funding considerations.
3. Disability Ministers have commissioned a research project to examine the effectiveness of existing unmet need funding to reduce unmet need and identify any remaining service gaps. Final outcomes of the above research project will not be available until 30 April 2002.
4. The Commonwealth is awaiting the outcomes of the above project.
5. Funding is the subject of current negotiations.

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Output Group: 3.2 Support for people with a disability.....Question No: 57

Topic: Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Denman asked:

Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement

1. Under the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement, what provision exists for the Federal Government to increase the funds it pays to support Award pay increases, such as the new NSW Social and Community Services (SACS) Award?
2. Non-Government organisations providing social services in NSW, received a payrise of between 5.5% and 7.5% effective 28 November 2001. In a media release by the Treasurer of NSW (Michael Egan) on 21 November, it stated the NSW State Government would pay its fair Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement, but the Federal Government **has not. Why not?**
3. Are the Federal Government and the NSW State Government currently involved in discussions on the flow of funding under the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement?
 - a) If so, when are these discussions expected to be resolved?
 - b) Are there any plans for interim measures addressing the cashflow problems of non-government organisations, while negotiations on the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement are underway?
4. Does the Department recognise that in refusing to meet its share of costs of the NSW SACS Award, it is seriously challenging the financial viability of 238 non-government organisations that provide disability services in NSW, and that it is not meeting its obligations under the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement?
5. Given the terms of the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement, why did the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) not inform disability organisation of its approach to meeting the NSW SACS Award variation payment?
6. Does the Department recognise that where the Commonwealth and the NSW State Governments are not meeting additional costs from the NSW Social and Community Services (SACS) Award, some non-government organisation are being placed in a position of possibility breaching corporations law as they are being forced to trade while insolvent?

Answer:

1. Additional funding for increased wage costs is provided through regular annual indexation of the Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement, a specific purpose payment to States. This occurs regardless of whether there has been a wage rise in the sector.
2. States are likely to have been advantaged over the last five years, as indexation is paid annually while the wages costs associated with the Social and Community Service Award have remain unchanged.
3. Yes.
 - A). The Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers responsible for disability services have announced their commitment to renegotiate the next Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement by 1 July 2002.
 - B). The Government would announce such plans if the Agreement is not in place by 1 July 2002.
4. The CSDA provides for annual indexation. Award increases are a matter for State governments.
5. The terms of the CSDA make no provision for State award increases.

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6. Under the terms of the funding agreement, Commonwealth funded services (ie employment services) agree to comply with all relevant legislation of the Commonwealth or of any State, Territory or local authority. Organisations are required to promptly inform the Department of Family and Community Services of any relevant matters that might affect the organisation's ability to meet its obligations under the agreement or which might reduce its financial viability.

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Output Group: 3.4 – Support for the Aged

Question No: 58

Topic: Pension Bonus Scheme

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

1. Please provide the original forward estimate (from date of introduction) of the expected costs and the expected savings under the Pension Bonus Scheme?
2. How has the Scheme actually performed against these initial costs and savings estimates?
3. What are the reasons for this result?
4. Based on the operation and take up of the Scheme, is the Department planning to alter the current Scheme including increasing the level of incentives offered to defer retirement?
5. Please provide a copy of the evaluation of the scheme conducted by Orima Research (Annual Report page 363)?

Response:

DEFERRED AGE PENSION PLAN – Original forward estimate of costs and savings

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Program Outlays	\$0.0	(\$16.393)	(\$34.139)	(\$31.717)
Departmental Expenses	\$2.416	(\$.0478)	(\$2.632)	(\$4.252)
Net outlays	\$2.416	(\$16.871)	(\$36.771)	(\$35.969)

The Pension Bonus Scheme has not achieved these initial estimates.

Currently, the Department is evaluating the Pension Bonus Scheme. Part of the evaluation goes to an exploration of the reasons for any non-performance, so it is premature to offer an explanation at this stage or to comment on outcomes resulting from the evaluation.

The report on the scheme undertaken by Orima Research (reference: FaCS Annual Report, page 363) forms part of this evaluation. The report has been received in the Department and is currently under consideration. It is not appropriate to release this report at this time.