



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**

Senator Wendy Askew  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator

**Correction to evidence provided at the 2021-22 Additional Estimates Hearing on  
17 February 2022**

I am writing to correct evidence provided to the Committee during its examination of the Social Services portfolio in relation to Department of Social Services Outcome 1 and Outcome 4.

In answering a question from Senator Polley (page 51 of Hansard) regarding the changes made to the Paid Parental Leave scheme, because of the pandemic, I said:

“Just to be clear, two adjustments were made. One was during the early phase of COVID, when the work test was expanded. The base was '10 out of 13 months before application' that you had to have worked. That was extended to 10 out of 20 of the preceding months, in recognition of the fact that, during the early phase of COVID, some people were unable to work”.....

I would like to correct the statement by changing it to:

There were three adjustments to the PPL scheme to support new parents though impacts of the COVID-19. The first amendment included allowing JobKeeper payments to count as qualifying work for the PPL work test. This was followed shortly by a temporary extension of the PPL work test period (from 13 months prior to the birth or adoption of their child to 20 months) for parents whose employment was impacted by COVID 19. This temporary measure applied to births and adoptions that occurred between 22 March 2020 and 31 March 2021, minimising the impact on families who were expecting or in the early stages of planning a new family, prior to the pandemic.

Separately, during the latter part of 2021, adjustments were made so that people who were receiving the COVID-19 disaster payment had that payment treated as qualifying work for the purposes of the PPL work test. So, even though they might not have been at work as a

result of stay-at-home orders, they were receiving the COVID-19 disaster payment in recognition that they had lost work and were able to count that.

In answering a question from Senator Smith (page 18 of Hansard) regarding workforce incentives for Pensioners, Mr Sloan said:

“If they earn one extra dollar and they're over that IFA—the income-free area that Mr Flavel talked about—and have exceeded the work bonus amount of \$300 a fortnight, for every dollar above that they get to keep 50 cents if they're a single or 75 cents if they're a couple.”

I would like to correct the statement by changing it to:

If they're over the income free area and have exceeded their work bonus amount of \$300 a fortnight, for every dollar earned above that their pension is reduced by 50 cents if they're single, or 25 cents each if they're a member of a couple.

In answering a question from Senator Polley (page 55 of Hansard) regarding the Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program, Mr Sloan said:

“There were six projects that were held over because there were decisions on whether to fund them or how to fund them; then budget additional funding was given in the following subsequent budget that allowed all of those six projects to be funded.”

I would like to correct the statement by changing it to:

There were six projects that were held over in the original announcement that required decisions on whether to fund them and how to fund them. Additional funding provided in the subsequent Budget allowed five of those six projects to be funded.

Yours sincerely



Matt Flavel  
Deputy Secretary  
Social Security

10 March 2022