

**COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – SERVICES AUSTRALIA – 2023-24 ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES - INDEX OF QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
– 14 FEBRUARY 2024**

QoN No.	Department/Agency	Senator	Subject	Question	Hansard page/Written	Hearing date/Date received
SQ24-000002	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Health Average Days to Process	What is the average days to process Health work and claims from 1 January 2024 to 1 March 2024?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000003	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Claims Completed and Claims over KPI	Per each service reason, what is the number of claims completed and the number of claims completed over KPI?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000004	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	SSW Claims on Hand and Over Standard	Per each SSW service reason, what is the number of claims on hand and the number of claims on hand over standard?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000005	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	SSW Claims on Hand as at 01 January 2024	What is the current number of SSW claims on hand as a 1 January 2024?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000006	Services Australia	Lidia Thorpe	Centrepay Compliance Reviews	Can you please provide an update of Centrepay compliance reviews for 22/23 and 23/24 to date, and the outcomes.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000007	Services Australia	Lidia Thorpe	Work to Address Centrepay Compliance Issues	Is the Department doing any work to address compliance issues with Centrepay and reduce the exploitation of recipients?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000008	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Minister Brief Turnaround Time	<p>Since 1 July 2023, has the Department/Agency been provided with advice or a direction on a minimum turnaround time for consideration of briefs by the Minister?</p> <p>If so, when was this advice provided to the Department?</p> <p>Please provide the minimum turnaround requirement.</p> <p>If there has been a change in a previously set minimum turnaround requirement, please provide:</p>	Written	23/02/2024

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				1. the previous turnaround requirement; and 2. the date the change was requested.		
SQ24-000009	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Minister's Office Hospitality	<p>Since 1 July 2023, has the Department provided any hospitality in Ministers' offices?</p> <p>Please specify the date, itemised cost, purpose, and attendees for the hospitality.</p> <p>Since 1 July 2023, have there been any amendments to the Department's policy on providing hospitality in the Ministers offices?</p> <p>If so, please provide a copy of the policy and a reference for the amendment</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000010	Services Australia	Jane Hume	DLOs in Minister's Office	<p>How many Departmental Liaison Officers have been allocated to each Minister in the portfolio?</p> <p>Please provide a list that outlines the level of the member of the department, the Minister they have been allocated to, and the time they have been allocated to the Minister.</p> <p>Please denote any change in this allocation since October 2023.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000011	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Staff in Minister's Office	<p>How many staff have been provided to Ministers offices not in a capacity as a Departmental Liaison Officer?</p> <p>Please provide a list that outlines the level of the member of the department, the Minister they have been allocated to, and the time they have been allocated to the Minister.</p>	Written	23/02/2024

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				Please denote any change in this allocation since October 2023.		
SQ24-000012	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Meetings with Minister within Portfolio	How many meetings has the Secretary/Agency head had with the Ministers in their portfolio since 1 July 2023? Please provide a list with the number of meetings by Minister, and the date of the first meeting with each Minister.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000013	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Meetings with Minister not in Portfolio	How many meetings has the Secretary/Agency head had with any Ministers not in their portfolio since 1 July 2023? Please provide a list with the number of meetings by Minister, and the date of the first meeting with each Minister.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000014	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Ministerial Briefs	How many briefs has the Department/Agency provided to each Minister in its portfolio? Please provide a list with the number of briefs for each Minister, and the date of the first provided brief. b. How many briefs have been returned to the Department for redraft? Please provide a list with the number of briefs for each Minister, and the dates of the return of briefs to the Department.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000015	Services Australia	Jane Hume	New Policy Proposals	How many New Policy Proposals has the Department/Agency provided to each Minister in its portfolio since 1 July 2023? Please provide a list with the number of New Policy Proposals by Minister, and the date of the first provided New Policy Proposal.	Written	23/02/2024

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SQ24-000016	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Paper Sources and Dollar Value	<p>Please provide the amount of paper the Department/Agency sources from Australian producers and from overseas producers.</p> <p>Please provide the amount in dollar value on a financial year basis for the last five financial years.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000017	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Commonwealth Inter-departmental Committee Memberships	<p>Please provide a list of all the Commonwealth inter-departmental committees of which the Department/Agency has membership.</p> <p>Please specify where there are changes to the list since October 2023.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000018	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Commonwealth Taskforce Memberships	<p>Please provide a list of all the Commonwealth taskforces of which the Department/Agency has membership.</p> <p>Please specify where there are changes to the list since October 2023.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000019	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Savings from External Labour, and Savings from Advertising, Travel and Legal Expenses	<p>In relation to the measure in the 2022-23 October Budget, Savings from External Labour, and Savings from Advertising, Travel and Legal Expenses.</p> <p>a. What was the value of savings that the Department/Agency was requested to deliver for the 2022-23 year in aggregate?</p> <p>b. Has the Department/Agency identified the savings they will make across the following areas to achieve this cut:</p> <p>I. External labour hire II. Consultancy III. Advertising campaigns IV. Travel V. Legal expenses</p> <p>c. Can the Department/Agency provide a</p>	Written	23/02/2024

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				<p>breakdown of the funding reductions they have made in totality, and in each of the above areas, and what they relate to?</p> <p>d. Has the Department/Agency been informed of the cut that will be made to their funding in the next financial year, or the rest of the forward estimates?</p> <p>e. Can the Department/Agency confirm the total new number of contracts (ongoing and terminating) and total cost of these contracts issued on AusTender since 30 June 2022 which relate to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. External labour hire ii. Consultancy iii. Advertising campaigns iv. Travel v. Legal expenses <p>f. Please provide a breakdown of the value of contracts across each area, and identify the categories on AusTender which are used to determine the Departments identification of the contracts.</p> <p>g. Is the Department/Agency on track to meet the saving target?</p> <p>h. Has the Department/Agency sought an exemption or alternation from/to the savings target?</p> <p>i. If so, why and was it approved?</p>		
SQ24-000020	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Agency Hosted Functions	<p>In relation to expenditure on any functions or official receptions etc hosted by the Department or agencies in the portfolio in financial year 2023/24 to date, please provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. List of functions; 	Written	23/02/2024

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				<p>b. List of attendees; c. Function venue; d. Itemised list of costs (GST inclusive); e. Details of any food served; f. Details of any wines or champagnes served including brand and vintage; and g. Details of any entertainment provided.</p>		
SQ24-000021	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Minister Hosted Functions	<p>In relation to any functions or official receptions hosted by Ministers or Assistant Ministers in the portfolio in financial year 2023/24 to date, please provide the following: a. List of functions; b. List of attendees; c. Function venue; d. Itemised list of costs (GST inclusive); e. Details of any food served; f. Details of any wines or champagnes served including brand and vintage; and g. Details of any entertainment provided</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000022	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Executive Officers Office Upgrades	<p>Were the furniture, fixtures or fittings of the Secretary’s/Agency head’s office, or the offices of any Deputy Secretaries/executive leadership team members, upgraded in financial year 2023/24 to date?</p> <p>Please provide an itemised list of costs (GST inclusive). Please provide photographs of the works conducted.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000023	Services Australia	Jane Hume	CEO’s Travel	<p>Please provide an itemised list of the Secretary’s/Agency head’s travel for financial year 2023/24 to date, including costs of flights and accommodation.</p>	Written	23/02/2024

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SQ24-000024	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Deputy CEO's Travel	Please provide an itemised list of each Deputy Secretary's/Agency head's travel for financial year 2023/24 to date, including costs of flights and accommodation.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000025	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Facilities Upgrades	<p>Were the facilities of any of the Departments/Agency premises upgraded in financial year 2023/24 to date, for example, staff room refurbishments, kitchen refurbishments, bathroom refurbishments, the purchase of any new fridges, coffee machines, or other kitchen equipment?</p> <p>Please provide a detailed description of the relevant facilities upgraded together with an itemised list of costs (GST inclusive).</p> <p>Please provide photographs of the upgraded facilities.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000026	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Staff Travel	What was the total cost of staff travel for Departmental/Agency employees in financial year 2023/24 to date?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000027	Services Australia	Janet Rice	2020 Long Term Staffing Modelling	Senator RICE: Welcome, Mr Hazlehurst. I want to start with issues of staffing, which you covered in your opening statement. In an interview with the Sydney Morning Herald and the Age, published yesterday, you said that benchmarking in 2020 identified that staff resourcing wouldn't be enough long term but noted the emergency resources that Services Australia got to cover during the COVID pandemic. Can you tell me, to begin with, in terms of our discussion about staffing, what that modelling in 2020 showed the deficit was going to be long term in terms of staffing?	7	14/02/2024

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				<p>Mr Hazlehurst: I don't have the details of that with me today. I'm happy to take that on notice and/or check with colleagues during the course of the morning to see if we have more information about that here with us today; I don't. But, as you described, I've been briefed that there was an issue identified before COVID. In effect, COVID, because of the additional resources and some of the streamlining of arrangements associated with processing to ensure things happened really quickly, masked those underlying issues, and they have become clear particularly since the middle of last year.</p>		
SQ24-000028	Services Australia	Linda Reynolds	<p>NZYQ High Court Decision – Timeframe and Discussion Detail</p>	<p>Senator REYNOLDS: The answer to my first question is yes, Services Australia have been working with Home Affairs and the individuals who were released from detention, correct? Mr Howard: I know that we had some dealings with the customers that were released from detention. I'm not aware of the detail of our engagement with Home Affairs. Senator REYNOLDS: Mr Hazlehurst? Mr Hazlehurst: I don't have anything further to add, Senator. I apologise. Senator REYNOLDS: Are you aware? Mr Hazlehurst: No, I'm not personally aware. Senator REYNOLDS: You're not aware that Services Australia has been working with these individuals who were released from detention? Mr Hazlehurst: I'm not personally aware of that, no. It's not something I've been briefed on at this stage. Senator REYNOLDS: It's not something that has</p>	11	14/02/2024

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				<p>been discussed in your briefings with the minister in preparation for question time?</p> <p>Mr Howard: We have dealt with that cohort of customers in the same way that we would with any cohort of customers when approached by a policy agency.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: Okay. I'll just ask a series of questions, and we'll see how we go.</p> <p>Mr Hazlehurst: Perhaps you can ask the questions and, if we don't know the answers right now, we can see what we can do during the course of the morning to provide you with those answers.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: I'm sorry, but that's really not good enough. Mr Howard, I know that you'll have your officials listening in to this and perhaps sitting in the other room. This is an important issue, and I've got a series of detailed questions because it's clear from the Home Affairs estimates yesterday that Services Australia has certainly been engaged actively with Home Affairs. My first question is: when did your agency first become aware of the ruling, which was made on 8 November? Were you aware of the potential for this earlier and did your staff start working up some options, or was it afterwards?</p> <p>Mr Howard: I'll take the time frame on notice. I'm not aware of it.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: On notice for today, please, Mr Howard. This is not a hard question. It is entirely predictable that this is something that was going to be asked, so I would ask that you—</p> <p>Mr Howard: We will best endeavour to answer—</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: come back to us afterwards.</p>		
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				<p>Okay, let me let me ask this question. Senator Ayres: Mr Howard has indicated that he will take it on notice. That means he will take it on notice. He is entitled to do that, and— Senator REYNOLDS: Senator Ayres, I— CHAIR: Senator Reynolds, apologies; Senator Ayres has the call. Minister, please continue. Senator Ayres: he has also indicated that, if he's able to provide more information over the course of the morning, he will. But he is entitled to take the question on notice. CHAIR: That is correct, Senator Ayres, and I will just remind committee members that it is an entitlement of witnesses— Senator REYNOLDS: Thank you very much. I'm very aware of that— CHAIR: Senator Reynolds, I am speaking as chair. It's not appropriate to speak over me as I do so. We appreciate you endeavouring to do that quickly, but it is appropriate for them to take it on notice. Senator Reynolds. Senator REYNOLDS: Thank you. The question I've got is: when was Services Australia, at any level, approached by Home Affairs, either officially or unofficially, about this cohort of detainees, either before or after the High Court ruling on 8 November? I understand—again, this is from other estimates—that Services Australia was liaising with Home Affairs, so can you provide me with: at what level? Clearly, Mr Hazlehurst had no engagement, which is a bit surprising. But, clearly, he didn't. So can you tell me if there is any— Mr Hazlehurst: I wasn't here. I wasn't in the job.</p>		
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				<p>Senator REYNOLDS: No—but you or your predecessor. My question is: at what level did those discussions occur with Home Affairs or anyone else, including DSS?</p> <p>Mr Howard: I can take the level on notice. What I would say is that I did not have any conversations with the minister's office or with the chief executive officer on this matter. In my mind, we were just dealing with another customer cohort.</p>		
SQ24-000030	Services Australia	Linda Reynolds	NZYQ High Court Decision – Multiple Questions	<p>Senator REYNOLDS: We'll come back to that. In terms of this business as usual, are you able to answer today: how did that liaison with Home Affairs go? I'm not just asking: when did they first advise any Services Australia staff? I'm asking: what are the liaison arrangements between Services Australia and Home Affairs? Are you able to answer that?</p> <p>Mr Howard: We have a relationship with a number of policy agencies that will let us know when particular circumstances happen.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: I understand that, but I've got very specific questions in relation to this cohort. Could you come back today, please, with who it was;</p> <p>what level of engagement there was with Home Affairs; and</p> <p>who is supporting that cohort—is it Services Australia specifically, or is there an intermediary or some sort of contractual arrangement, either by Home Affairs or yourself?</p> <p>Could you also advise me how many of that cohort Services Australia is assisting? and at what point? and</p>	12	14/02/2024

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				at what numbers Services Australia was advised of this cohort? and how they were being dealt with as business as usual? Can you answer any of those questions yet? Mr Howard: I'll take them on notice.		
SQ24-000031	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Media Monitoring Expenditure	What was the Department's/Agency's total expenditure on media monitoring services in financial year 2023/24 to date?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000032	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Advertising and Information Campaigns Expenditure	What was the Department's/Agency's total expenditure on advertising and information campaigns in financial year 2023/24 to date? Please provide an itemised list of the campaigns, their purpose, and their expected costs.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000033	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Promotional Merchandise Expenditure	What was the Department's/Agency's total expenditure on promotional merchandise in financial year 2023/24 to date? Please provide an itemised list of the merchandise purchased with costs. Please provide examples and photographs of the merchandise purchased.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000034	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Agency Credit Cards	In relation to departmental use of credit cards: a. How many credit cards are currently on issue for Department or Agency staff? b. What was the value of the largest reported purchase on a credit card in financial year 2023/24 to date and what was it for? c. How much interest was paid on amounts outstanding from credit cards in financial year 2023/24 to date? d. How much was paid in late fees on amounts	Written	23/02/2024

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				<p>outstanding from credit cards in financial year 2023/24 to date?</p> <p>e. What was the largest amount outstanding on a single card at the end of a payment period in financial year 2023/24 to date?</p> <p>f. How many credit cards were reported as lost or stolen in financial year 2023/24 to date and what was the cost of their replacement?</p> <p>g. How many credit card purchases were deemed to be illegitimate or contrary to department or agency policy in financial year 2023/24 to date? What was the total value of those purchases? How many purchases were asked to be repaid on that basis in financial year 2023/24 to date and what was the total value thereof? Were all those amounts actually repaid? If no, how many were not repaid, and what was the total value thereof?</p> <p>h. What was the largest purchase that was deemed illegitimate or contrary to department or agency policy and asked to be repaid in financial year 2023/243 to date? What that amount actually repaid, in full? If no, what amount was left unpaid?</p> <p>i. Are any credit cards currently on issue connected to rewards schemes? Do staff receive any personal benefit as a result of those reward schemes?</p> <p>j. Please provide a copy of the department or agency's staff credit card policy.</p> <p>k. Please denote any changes to this policy that have been made since February 2023</p>		
SQ24-000035	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Comcare Matters	<p>In relation to Department/Agency:</p> <p>a. In the current financial year to date, how many matters have been referred to Comcare?</p> <p>b. Of those claims referred to Comcare, redacting</p>	Written	23/02/2024

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				<p>confidential information, advise in which division the claimant works or worked and the circumstances surrounding the claim.</p> <p>c. What has the Department/Agency learned from past Comcare claims?</p> <p>d. Of those employees who submitted a Comcare claim, how many returned to work after a period of absence?</p>		
SQ24-000036	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Fair Work Commission Matters	<p>In relation to the department/Agency:</p> <p>a. In the current financial year to date, how many matters have been referred to the Fair Work Commission?</p> <p>b. Of those matters referred to either, please provide a comprehensive account of the circumstances, redacting confidential information, including in which division the employee is or was employed, the nature of the complaint and the nature of the determination of the Fair Work Commission, Fair Work Ombudsman and/or conciliator.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000037	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Agency Reviews being Conducted	<p>Please provide a list of the number of reviews that the department/Agency is currently conducting.</p> <p>Please provide:</p> <p>a. the name of the review;</p> <p>b. the purpose of the review;</p> <p>c. the name or names of the reviewer(s);</p> <p>d. the remuneration for each of the reviewer(s);</p> <p>e. the budgeted cost of the review;</p> <p>f. the amount spent to date; and</p> <p>g. the date the review is due to be completed.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000038	Services Australia	Linda Reynolds	NZYQ High Court Decision – Visa Class	Senator REYNOLDS: Thank you very much, Minister Ayres, for chewing up my time. I have other	12	14/02/2024

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				<p>questions I'd like to ask, and I know people are listening. With reference to that cohort of individuals, What visa class were they coming into Services Australia on?</p> <p>That obviously impacts on eligibility for different benefits, so could you advise as to their visa class when you first became aware of them?, what they were eligible for? and whether that has transitioned as you've been dealing with them?.</p> <p>Mr Howard: I will take that on notice, but I'll note that we're probably getting to a point where we're starting to discuss individual customer circumstances, and we will be limited as to what we can say publicly.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: I asked for the cohort.</p> <p>Mr Howard: I'll take it on notice, but—</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: Are they on visas 144 or 149? Can you let me know the answer to a simpler question, then: What is the SRSS rate currently?</p> <p>Mr Howard: No. I'd have to take that on notice. I'm not aware. I don't know.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: Do you have any officials here who can actually talk about the rates of payments that Services Australia make?</p> <p>Mr Howard: No. We'll take it on notice.</p>		
SQ24-000039	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Agency Reviews Completed	<p>Please provide a list of the number of reviews that the Department/Agency has completed since 1 July 2022.</p> <p>Please provide</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the name of the review; b. the purpose of the review; 	Written	23/02/2024

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SQ24-000040	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Agency Internal Reviews	<p>Please provide a list of the number of internal reviews that the Department/Agency has completed since 1 July 2023.</p> <p>Please provide</p> <p>a. the name of the review; b. the purpose of the review; c. the name or names of the reviewer(s); d. the remuneration for each of the reviewer(s); e. the budgeted cost of the review; f. the amount spent; g. the date the review was due to be completed; h. the date the review was completed; i. if the Minister or their office was made aware of the review.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000041	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Interdepartmental Committees Representation	<p>Please provide a list of the interdepartmental committees that the Department/Agency participates in or provides representation to.</p> <p>Please provide:</p> <p>a. the name of the interdepartmental committee;</p>	Written	23/02/2024

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				<p>b. a list of the membership; c. the date it was established; and d. its purpose.</p>		
SQ24-000042	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Entities	<p>How many new entities (including advisory boards and agencies) have been created within the portfolio since 1 July 2022? Please list each entity, its purpose, and the date it was created.</p> <p>How many new entities (including advisory boards and agencies) have been wound up, amalgamated, ceased, disbanded, or reconstituted as new bodies since 1 July 2022? Please list each entity, its purpose, and the date it was wound up, amalgamated, ceased, or disbanded.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000043	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	SSW Average Days to Process	What is the SSW Average days to process from 1 January 2024 to 1 March 2024?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000044	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Data Requests by Electorate	<p>Since 1 July 2023, has the Department/Agency ever received a request from a portfolio minister’s office seeking data or information separated out by electorate?</p> <p>a. Please provide a list of all requests, including any timeframe provided for a response, whether a response was provided, and the context of the request if provided.</p> <p>b. Please provide a copy of all responses to the request.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000045	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Staffing	<p>Please provide the number of current ASL allocated to the Department/Agency as at 1 February 2024.</p> <p>Please provide:</p> <p>a. Total number of ASL; b. Total number of FTE by APS classification; c. the number of ASL allocated to each outcome for</p>	Written	23/02/2024

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				<p>which the Department/Agency is responsible; and</p> <p>d. the number of FTE, by classification, allocated to each outcome for which the Department/Agency is responsible; and</p> <p>e. The number of FTE positions that are not currently filled, broken down by classification.</p>		
SQ24-000046	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Market Research	<p>Has the Department/Agency provided any Minister’s office with market research conducted in relation to a Commonwealth Information and Advertising Campaign?</p> <p>Please provide a list of the Ministers and the date on which they were provided the research.</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000048	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Agency FOI Applications	<p>How many freedom of information applications has the Department/Agency received since 1 July 2023?</p> <p>Please provide a breakdown of the number including;</p> <p>a. the number of applications withdrawn;</p> <p>b. the number of applications refused under section 34 of the Freedom of Information Act 1982;</p> <p>c. the number of applications refused under section 24 of the Freedom of Information Act 1982;</p> <p>d. the number of applications refused under section 24A of the Freedom of Information Act 1982;</p> <p>e. the number of applications subject to internal review;</p> <p>f. the number of applications subject to review by the OAIC;</p> <p>g. the number of applications subject to review by the AAT;</p> <p>h. the number of applications subject to review by the Federal Court; and</p>	Written	23/02/2024

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				i. the number of applications where the original decision has been overturned.		
SQ24-000049	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Minster's Officer FOI Applications	How many freedom of information applications have been received by the Minister's office since 1 July 2023? Please provide a breakdown including; a. the number of applications by Minister, i. the number of applications that are yet to be decided; ii. the number of applications refused; and iii. the number of applications overdue, including the number of days overdue.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000050	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Portfolio Estimate Variations	For the portfolio, please provide a list of the ten largest estimate variations in the most recent financial year.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000051	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Portfolio Movements	For the portfolio, please provide a list of the ten largest movements of funds in the most recent financial year, including a profile of the forward estimates for the impact of the movement.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000052	Services Australia	Jane Hume	WFH Flexible Work Arrangement	1. How many staff have a flexible work arrangement in place that enables them to work from home? 2. Please provide a breakdown including; a. The proportion of staff who work from home one day a week? b. The proportion of staff who work from home two days a week? c. The proportion of staff who work from home three days a week? d. The proportion of staff who work from home four days a week? e. The proportion of staff who work from home five days a week?	Written	23/02/2024

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				<p>3. What is the annual cost of renting out office space for employees?</p> <p>4. Please provide a copy of the Department/Agency’s work from home policy.</p>		
SQ24-000053			Claim Processing Times Effect on Call Wait Times	<p>Mr Birrer: Exactly. There is a difference between the raising of a debt and doing that work behind the scenes. And the sooner you do that to the event that led to the potential overpayment the easier it is, from a processing perspective, for our staff, but also, I believe, the better it is for the customer because they're aware and so they can factor it into their financial planning.</p> <p>That's separate from the recovery aspect, where we do undertake recovery of the debts. Where people have hardships, including at the moment where people are having potential hardships from the disasters that we're seeing in this year's disaster season, there can be arrangements then put in place where people can choose to either reduce the repayments that they're making as part of that recovery or, indeed, pause them for a period of time. But during COVID, the policy settings then were that we weren't raising them, so people didn't have visibility as well as the agency not being able to action them. As a result of that we still have a significant number of potential overpayments that require processing that date back further than what we would like either from a customer transparency perspective or the efficiency of managing the Agency and the ebb and stock of our work that goes back a number of years into that COVID period.</p>	17	14/02/2024
	Services Australia	Louise Pratt				

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				<p>CHAIR: Senator Pratt, this will be your last question.</p> <p>Senator PRATT: What's the impact of that on the backlog? I presume in some instances, depending on whether people have underlying debts they weren't aware of but have new claims in, it can add to the complexity of getting someone's claim processed. In terms of the wait times, which we've already discussed, are people calling to ask where their claim is up to, and is that impacting on the wait times? Do you have any data on that?</p> <p>Mr Howard: The reasons why people call are slightly different depending on the line that they are calling. We do know there's a large portion of customers that are calling for what we would call a general inquiry, to check in on where their claim is at.</p> <p>The general inquiry line is also aware if the IVR doesn't pick up on exactly what you're calling for. Then it gets grouped in. We do have some data on that, which, if you're comfortable, I might take on notice to—</p> <p>Senator PRATT: That's fine. Please feel free to table it.</p>		
SQ24-000054	Services Australia	Jane Hume	ChatGPT Use	<p>1. Does the Department/Agency allow for the use of ChatGPT on the internal network?</p> <p>a. If so, what risk management and governance mechanisms are in place to protect government data?</p> <p>2. Please provide the Department/Agency policy on use of artificial intelligence.</p>	Written	23/02/2024

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SQ24-000055	Services Australia	Jane Hume	External Training for Senate Estimates	Has the Department/Agency engaged any external companies or individuals to provide training or advice to officials on the preparation for Senate Estimates?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000056	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Funding Paid Against Claim/Work Category	In FY 2022-23, what was the total quantum of funding paid out across each claim/work category?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000057	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Minister's Office Direction on Senate Estimates	Has the Department/Agency been provided with direction or instruction from the Minister's office on how to answer questions at Senate Estimates?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000058	Services Australia	Janet Rice	IVR and Congestion Messaging	<p>Senator RICE: On the basic figures you've given us here for employment services, you handled just over three million calls and over two million people got congestion messages. That, to me, is almost 40 per cent of people who were trying to get through to you that weren't able to. Their calls were effectively blocked.</p> <p>Mr Howard: They're not blocked. What I would say to that is: if you look in the other column, at the balance inquiry, where we've got nearly two million customers that have self-managed, that's through the IVR. They may have accessed the IVR while congestion messages were being played, and yet those two million customers have got a service that they wanted from the Agency. So there are some customers that will never speak to a service officer.</p> <p>Senator RICE: Can you take on notice: are you able to track how many of those people that got that congestion message were then happy after they had gone through the IVR?</p> <p>Mr Howard: I don't think we can—</p> <p>Senator RICE: No. I've asked this before.</p> <p>Mr Howard: but I will take on notice to look at what we—</p>	19	14/02/2024

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				<p>CHAIR: Senator Rice, this will be the last question.</p> <p>Senator RICE: I'll just go to the question I had on notice—SQ23-000690—where I asked, 'Given that we've got on average'—and we've now got an average of 33 minutes wait time, going up to 52 minutes for people on families and parenting payment. That means there are an awful lot of people who are waiting for well over an hour— which is what I asked in that question on notice. The answer I received back referred me to a tabled document which was about days of processing of claims—no information about wait times for people on the phone, in terms of how many people are waiting for over an hour. Are you able to have that information tabled?</p> <p>Mr Howard: Yes. I've got some folks listening in to see if we can table that today.</p> <p>Senator RICE: I do need you to know that I've got other documents that I would like to table— a range of documents.</p>		
SQ24-000059	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Agency Market Research	<p>Has the Department/Agency conducted any market research or research relating to a communications campaign?</p> <p>Has that research been provided to a Minister's office?</p> <p>Did the Minister's office provide any input on the development of the research?</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000060	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Conflict of Interest Declaration	<p>Has the Secretary/Agency Head provided a conflict of interest declaration?</p> <p>Has this declaration been updated since they took their position?</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000061	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Portfolio Programme and Project Framework	<p>What is the Portfolio Programme and Project Framework?</p>	Written	22/02/2024

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SQ24-000062	Services Australia	Jane Hume	CEO Leave Arrangements	Please provide a list of dates the Secretary/Agency head took leave since 1 July 2023, and which officer of the Department/Agency acted for the Secretary during this time.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000063	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Agency Vacant Positions	Please provide a list of positions that are currently vacant within the Department as at 1 February 2024. As at 1 February 2024, how many positions within the Department/Agency have been vacant for longer than 90 days? Please provide a list of these positions by APS level.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000064	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Internal Recruitment	How many positions within the Department/Agency have been filled without advertising externally to the public since 1 July 2022?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000065	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Acting Arrangements	As at 1 February 2024, how many positions within the Department/Agency have staff in acting positions where the acting arrangement has been longer than 90 days? Please provide a list of these positions by APS level.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000066	Services Australia	Jane Hume	WFH 3 or More Days per Week	Please provide a list by APS level of the number of staff with working from home arrangements of three or more days per week.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000067	Services Australia	Jane Hume	ACT Staff WFH	Please provide as a number and as a percentage the amount of staff who have working from home arrangements within the ACT.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000068	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Leased Office Space	As at 1 February 2024, please provide a list of the office space leased by the Department/Agency, with addresses and the accommodation capacity.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000069	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Longest Length of Service	As at 1 February 2024, what is the number of years of service of the longest continuing serving member of the Department/Agency?	Written	23/02/2024

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SQ24-000070	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Public Holiday Work Arrangements	As at 1 February 2024, how many staff within the Department/Agency have put in place agreements to work on Australia Day Public Holiday? As at 1 February 2024, how many staff within the Department/Agency have put in place agreements to work on Anzac Day Public Holiday? As at 1 February 2024, how many staff within the Department/Agency have put in place agreements to work on The King’s Birthday Public Holiday?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000071	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Professional Development	Since 1 July 2023, how much has the Department/Agency spent on the provision of professional development training for staff from external providers?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000072	Services Australia	Jane Hume	General Property Maintenance	Please provide an annual expenditure breakdown of the general expenses the Department/Agency has for general property maintenance costs from 2018 until 2023. Please include gardening, utility bills, cleaning, building renovations, updates and repairs in the breakdown. Please provide a list of the contracts the Department/Agency has for gardening, clearing and building maintenance.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000073	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Operational Expenditure Additional Funding	How many times in the current financial year has the Department/Agency made a request for additional funding for operational expenditure?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000074	Services Australia	Jane Hume	APS Academy Participation	How many staff within the Department/Agency have participated in courses, programmes or activities operated by the APS Academy?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000075	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Questions on Notice Quality	Does the Department/Agency adjust the quality of their responses to Questions on Notice based on the number of Questions on Notice received?	Written	23/02/2024

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SQ24-000076	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Freedom of Information Staffing	How many staff in the Department/Agency are allocated to the processing of Freedom of Information applications?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000077	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Election Commitments Advice to Minister	Has the Department/Agency provided advice to the Minister in relation to the delivery of election commitments?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000078	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Implementation of Election Commitments	Is the Department/Agency tracking the implementation of relevant election commitments made by the Government at the 2022 election?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000079	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Social Media Influencers	Has the Department/Agency engaged any social media influencers to assist in any promotional or communications campaigns? Please provide a list of the individuals engaged.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000080	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Debt Activities	Are there any temporary pauses on operational debt activities including raising, recovery and compensation currently in effect	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000081	Services Australia	Jane Hume	External Speakers	Has the Department/Agency engaged any external speakers to address staff? Please provide a list and the amount paid to the speaker.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000082	Services Australia	Jane Hume	External Retreats	Has the Department/Agency held any organised external retreats for staff? Please provide a list including the number of staff who attended, the location of the retreat and the cost incurred by the Department/Agency.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000083	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Overseas Ministerial Visits	How many briefs has the Department/Agency provided to the Minister on potential overseas Ministerial visits?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000085	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Legacy ICT Systems	List every legacy ICT system Services Australia currently operates.	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000086	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Projects/Program Hypercare	What programs or projects are currently in hypercare?	Written	22/02/2024

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SQ24-000087	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Staff Official International Visits	How many official international visits have been taken by staff since 1 July 2023?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000088	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Security Clearances	How many staff of the Department/Agency have undertaken security clearance processes, or renewed security clearances, since 1 July 2023? How many staff of the Department/Agency who have undertaken security clearance processes, or renewed security clearances, who are yet to receive their clearance? Of these staff, how many have been waiting for clearances for over 6 months? Of these staff, how many have been waiting for clearances for over 12 months?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000089	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Staff Turnover	What is the current turnover rate for staff within the Department/Agency?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000090	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Senate Estimates Briefs Oindex	Please provide a copy of the index of Senate Estimates briefs that were prepared for the Department/Agency for the Senate Estimates hearings held 12 February to 16 February 2024.	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000091	Services Australia	Jane Hume	Supplementary Budget Senate Estimates QoN Index	Please provide a list of the questions on notice from the previous Senate Estimates hearings outlining the following: 1. the number of the Question on Notice; 2. the Senator who asked the Question on Notice; 3. the date the draft response to the Question on Notice was provided to the Minister’s office; 4. the date the Minister’s office provided approval for the Question on Notice to be tabled; 5. the date the Question on Notice was tabled; and 6. whether the draft response was different to the tabled response.	Written	23/02/2024

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SQ24-000092	Services Australia	Linda Reynolds	<p>NZYQ - SRSS and Special Benefit - Multiple Questions</p>	<p>Senator REYNOLDS: Mr Hazlehurst, I note you said you'd have the right officials here to answer these questions after the morning tea break. Out of respect for the committee and for time, I will run through the questions now so that they've got time, so when we come back they can go through and answer the questions.</p> <p>The first question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. what is the SRSS payment and how does it work between Home Affairs and Services Australia doing the payment? 2. What is the rate? 3. Is it delivered weekly, fortnightly or monthly? 4. What requirements does a person have to meet in order to be eligible for the payment? 5. How many individuals in total receive the payment? 6. How many as part of this cohort we're talking about receive the SRSS? 7. What is the dollar figure that has been paid collectively to this cohort—not individuals? 8. What is the current average number of days taken to process an SRSS claim more generally? 9. How long has it taken to process this cohort, which you've said you manage separately? 10. How many SRSS claims are currently on hand in total? 11. How many are remaining for this cohort? 12. It might be in the 300 pages you've just tabled, but if someone could specifically answer the timeliness standard for SRSS? 13. With reference to the particular cohort we're talking about, how many have been determined to 	24-25	14/02/2024
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				<p>be eligible also then to apply for a special benefit?</p> <p>14. My understanding is that, at the moment, they're on the SRSS payment by arrangement between the agency and the department, and that Services Australia is now assessing the entire cohort for the special benefit payment. If you could confirm that.</p> <p>15. Could you also confirm what the special benefit rate is?</p> <p>16. Is it delivered weekly, fortnightly or monthly?</p> <p>17. What requirements does a person have to meet in order to be eligible?</p> <p>18. How many individuals, as part of that cohort, have received the special benefit payment to date, if any?</p> <p>19. What is the dollar figure that has been paid to this cohort in total—again, not on an individual level—from the special benefit to date?</p> <p>20. What is the current average number of days taken to process a special benefit claim across everybody who's applying for special benefit, and what is the current average rate for this particular cohort?</p> <p>21. How many special benefit claims are currently on hand?</p> <p>22. What is the timeliness standard for the special benefit? Does it have a timeliness standard, or what is expected?</p> <p>23. When an individual is waiting for their special benefit claim to be granted, can they be eligible for a higher rate of SRSS, again under arrangements with Home Affairs? If there is a higher rate that they might be eligible for, what is the higher rate?</p>		
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				<p>24. Of that particular cohort, how many, if any, are receiving that higher rate of SRSS, and what is that payment?</p> <p>25. Of that specific cohort, are there any who are currently in receipt of income support payments?</p> <p>26. Have any normal or usual eligibility requirements been waived for this particular cohort when applying for a special benefit? My understanding is that there may be a 13-week waiting requirement that can be waived for eligibility for that.</p> <p>27. Are any of this cohort receiving other payments and support, including things like a healthcare card, family tax benefit, parental leave pay, childcare subsidy and Medicare?</p> <p>28. The last question in this on those two different payments through Services Australia is: how many members are there of this cohort, and have they been prioritised as a cohort under your BAU arrangements for special cohorts, or are they subject to the same queue as anybody else for those two benefits and payments?</p> <p>Mr Hazlehurst: It might not surprise you that, given that's about another 30 questions in addition to the questions you asked earlier, I have not been able to write them all down. If you would be so kind as to provide us with what you are reading from—</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: We can, but, as you're aware, it's also available online.</p> <p>CHAIR: Please allow Mr Hazlehurst to finish his sentence.</p> <p>Mr Hazlehurst: We're very happy to provide</p>		
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				<p>answers to all of those questions. Whether we'll be able to provide answers to all of them immediately after the morning tea break, I'm not sure, but we will do our best.</p> <p>Senator Ayres: Senator, I understand that you've gone to an effort to alert the department and officials to the scope of the questions, so thank you for that. In terms of how particular questions are responded to, you asked for answers after the break, and officials will try and answer them. Of course, many of the answers to the questions that you've asked in terms of what happens with a particular visa are publicly available already. I think it's on page 34 of the Australian government payments guidelines, which you would be aware of. Let's see how we proceed through the line of questions after the break.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: Thank you, Senator Ayres. I'll finish there, Chair, but these are questions that, had we had the right officials at the table to answer questions about these two payments that Services Australia make, I could have asked just after nine o'clock this morning and gone through very quickly. They're not unusual questions, and they're certainly questions that the right officials in the department could have answered if they were here at 9.30 this morning. I'm trying to expedite the process.</p> <p>Mr Hazlehurst: We did not have notice of that line of questioning. I have 180 SES officers. I'm not trying to be difficult here.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: I didn't say that.</p> <p>Senator Ayres: It was certainly the implication.</p>		
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				<p>Senator REYNOLDS: I said those are questions that I would have liked to have asked and received answers to. They're two entirely routine payments that Services Australia makes, and they are entirely appropriate questions for estimates. Anyway, I've now given you them to speed up the process. It would be good if you could have somebody who can provide that information today.</p> <p>Mr Howard: Just to formalise that: I will take those questions on notice. I will see which ones I can answer after the break. I suspect, as the CEO has said, we will not have all the answers to all those questions, but, best endeavours, I'll come back with what I have.</p>		
SQ24-000093	Services Australia	Anne Ruston	Commemorating 40 Years of Medicare	What is the cost of producing the 40th Anniversary Medicare Cards?	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000094	Services Australia	Michaelia Cash	Property held within the Agency	<p>Please provide a list of all property/land that is in the possession of the Agency/Department/Statutory Authority with the following details:</p> <p>a. Location of the property or land;</p> <p>b. Is it owned by the Agency/Department/statutory Authority or leased;</p> <p>i. If leased – when does the lease expire;</p> <p>c. Total footprint in square metres; and</p> <p>d. Total footprint in sqm excluding areas specifically designated for interaction with the public (e.g.: excluding hearing rooms for particular matters, but including kitchens, breakout and internal meeting rooms).</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000095	Services Australia	Michaelia Cash	Underpayment of Worker Entitlements	Are you aware of any underpayments of worker entitlements in your Agency/Department/Statutory Authority since 2021-22 Financial year?	Written	23/02/2024

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				<p>a. If yes, please provide how many instances it has occurred, what was the quantum of underpayment, and how many workers were impacted?</p> <p>b. Did you report it to the Fair Work Ombudsman as a self-report?</p>		
SQ24-000096	Services Australia	Michaelia Cash	Working from Home Arrangements	<p>1. What is the proportion of staff that are on formal Work from Home (WFH) arrangements in the Agency/Department/Statutory Authority?</p> <p>2. How many have informally used WFH arrangements?</p> <p>3. What is the average number of staff that are WFH on any given workday?</p> <p>4. What is the most senior level of employee who has a formal work from arrangement in place?</p> <p>a. What is that arrangement – how many days a week do they attend the office?</p> <p>b. Are they in charge of a team of employees? How many in that team?</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000097	Services Australia	Michaelia Cash	Working from Home Arrangements - Departmental Staff	<p>1. Does the Agency/Department/Statutory Authority have a breakdown across all offices on how many have a formal working from home arrangement?</p> <p>2. How many staff in the Agency/Department/Statutory Authority work permanently from home?</p> <p>3. do any staff with remote working arrangements now based outside of Australia?</p> <p>4. Of those based outside of Australia, is the Agency/Department/Statutory Authority aware of their current location, and what security protocols do you have in place for their device access?</p>	Written	23/02/2024

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SQ24-000098	Services Australia	Michaelia Cash	Working from Home Arrangements - Productivity	<p>1. How do you assess the productivity of employees within the Agency/Department/Statutory Authority? Do you have any indication of the productivity of employees working from home – has it changed in any way?</p> <p>2. How often do employees undergo performance appraisals? How is WFH built into that process now – is the WFH arrangement taken into account with assessing performance?</p> <p>a. (if yes) – How does that work?</p>	Written	23/02/2024
SQ24-000099	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Projects/Program Expenditure	Which projects/programs has Services Australia invested in over FYTD have a forecast expenditure of under \$5 million?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000100	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Passkeys	<p>When will Passkeys be live?</p> <p>Will using a Passkey be optional?</p>	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000101	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Special Benefit Processing Time	<p>Senator KOVACIC: My understanding is that, given that the timeliness standard for this special benefit payment is 14 days, people involved in the NZYQ ruling were prioritised and the payment of their benefits was prioritised in your system over the payment of age pensioners, carers and people on disability support. The closest cohort out of those four that I've described is 63 days—versus 14 days for the special benefit payment—which is extraordinarily variant. At the other end, we're at 91.2 days for an age pensioner in this country. They have to wait three months, but somebody who's been released under the NZYQ ruling will get to have their benefits in 14 days.</p> <p>Mr Howard: I can't talk to that cohort. I don't have that information in front of me, so I don't know how long it's taken us to process that particular</p>	26	14/02/2024

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				<p>cohort. What I can say is that, for special benefit— Senator KOVACIC: It's in the tabled document. It says 14 days.</p> <p>Mr Howard: What I can say is that, for special benefit, our target is 80 per cent of those claims within 21 days. At the moment, as of 11 February, we are tracking at 70.3 per cent of claims processed in that target time frame. I can't talk to the cohort of the High Court case, because I'm not 100 per cent sure how that fits in there, so I'll take that element on notice. But, if you look at, for example, crisis payments, 90 per cent of that is within two days, and at the moment we're processing 65—</p>		
SQ24-000102	Services Australia	Linda Reynolds	SRSS Payments Start Date	<p>Senator REYNOLDS: That information that was tabled is 300 pages. It was very interesting, thank you. With the SRSS payment, was that paid from day one on release?</p> <p>If you don't have that answer, can you come back with that?</p> <p>Mr Howard: I'll take that on notice, Senator.</p>	26	14/02/2024
SQ24-000103	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Adobe Target Functionality	Has the Adobe Target functionality become live?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000104	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	myGov Advisory Board	On what dates do the myGov advisory board met?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000105	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Special Benefit – Other Payments	<p>Senator KOVACIC: Sorry, I'm not sure if the last bit of my question was heard. I just want to make sure it was—that is, to understand what other payments are involved in a special benefit payment.</p> <p>Mr Howard: I will take that on notice, Senator, just to make sure.</p>	26	14/02/2024
SQ24-000106	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Sustain myGov Budget Measure	What entities are currently engaged as part of procurement for the 'Sustain myGov' budget measure?	Written	22/02/2024

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SQ24-000107	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Payment Accuracy Calculation Anomalies	Has the Agency encountered any anomalies over the past year and a half in the methodology used by DSS to calculate payment accuracy?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000108	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Superannuation Not Assessing at Pension Age System Error Remediation Team	<p>Ms Faichney: These are complex assessments because it is the age care pension. So it is skilled staff that are needed to do this but they're equally the same skilled staff who are putting new customers onto the age pension.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: That goes to my next question. I think in response to the media inquiries the Agency noted that it was a dedicated team of specialised staff. When was this special crack team stood up? When did they start working on this problem?</p> <p>Ms Gannon: We first started to remediate records in January 2023. It was 16 January to be precise.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: How many staff are currently in that team?</p> <p>Ms Gannon: That is a question we can't answer. I will have to take that on notice. We may have started with a certain number and they may be diverted to work on other issues and then come back into the team as priorities ebb and flow. So I will take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: Do we have a rough ballpark figure of how many people may have been in that team at any point in time?</p> <p>Ms Gannon: I'm sorry. I don't have that information. I can take that on notice.</p>	29	14/02/2024
SQ24-000109	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Contract Value Change	With reference to SQ23-000806, why did the contract value change?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000110	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Superannuation not Assessing at Age Pension	Senator KOVACIC: At the last round of estimates I asked officials about revelations arising from internal briefs obtained by the opposition under	28, 30	14/02/2024

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			Age – Underpayment Figures	<p>FOI that superannuation had not been assessed correctly at the pension age. This was reported in national media on 24 November 2023. Unfortunately, no-one was able to provide me with basic information about this bungle during the last round of estimates, such as how many customers had been affected. I do note for the record that Minister Shorten is also yet to issue any public statement about this disaster. Instead, he preferred to have an Agency spokesman come out and deal with it on his behalf, as usual. Can somebody finally tell me how many customers have been affected by this issue and whether all the customers affected by this bungle have been contacted?</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: In terms of underpayments, do you have any data on that and how many customers were underpaid and for what period of time?</p> <p>Ms Gannon: I don't, actually, have anything on underpayments.</p> <p>Ms Faichney: We can make the assumption the difference is that those who have had them waived are either nil rate change or there may have been a up top-up to them. So it would be whatever that number is. But we will have to take on notice whether we can break that down.</p>		
SQ24-000111	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Age Pension – Systems Errors	<p>Senator KOVACIC: Finally, regarding the brief mention that this entire bungle was caused by systems error, are you able to give us any insight into what that systems error was? How many other similar systems errors have occurred in the past</p>	30	14/02/2024

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				<p>financial year?</p> <p>Ms Gannon: What I can say is that we do know that that error was specific, as I mentioned, to that cohort of customers who were early claiming. Our technical teams would have looked into the system to see what specific triggers had led to that happening, and that was fixed. In terms of other errors, I don't have any information to hand.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: Would you be able to provide on notice if there are other system errors of a similar nature?</p> <p>Ms Gannon: Yes, I can take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: I have a couple more to put on notice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every system error over this past financial year and in 2023, 2. the nature of each of those system errors, 3. what the status of the system error was or is, 4. what functionality it impacted, 5. when the system error was found and 6. if any remediation work was carried out as a result of that system error being found. <p>Ms Faichney: Can we just confirm this is specifically to do with the age pension?</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: Correct. It's in relation to age pensions. Thank you.</p>		
SQ24-000112	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	enhanced IM	How many customers are currently under enhanced IM arrangements?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000113	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	CDC Usage	As at 5 March 2023, how many participants were using a CDC at each respective location?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000114	Services Australia	Janet Rice	Staff Attrition	Ms Regeling: I'd say that, certainly, over the last 12 months, as you would understand, we've seen a very tight labour market, and the 14 per cent	31	14/02/2024

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				<p>attrition that we are seeing across the Agency is very much in line with that sort of industry attrition rate. We know that from independent sources such as the Australian Human Resources Institute, which published in their September quarter updates last year that attrition across industry had risen from about 12 per cent to 14 per cent, so there was on an upturn. That equates to what we saw in that same period last year. Obviously we would like to see a greater retention of our workforce. We invest significantly in their development and their skills. Mr Howard has already spoken today about the value of the existing workforce that is training our new starters.</p> <p>As I said, we are keen to look at improvement in our retention but we think that will also come with some of stability in the labour market.</p> <p>Senator RICE: Do you have any comparison over time, say over the last five or 10 years, about what your attrition rate has been?</p> <p>Ms Regeling: I'd have to take that on notice. Like I said, over the last 12 months it's been at a fairly steady state, with some fluctuation.</p>		
SQ24-000115	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Special Benefit	As at 1 July 2023, 31 December 2023 at 1 February 2024 respectively, how many individuals were in receipt of the Special Benefit?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000116	Services Australia	Janet Rice	Reports - Non-Adherence	Senator RICE: I want to continue my line of questioning from my last session, which was about people on breaks and monitoring the time that people are on breaks. Mr Howard, you were talking about the figures and whether, if it's 30 minutes over a one-month period, that's potentially in one day or whatever. Can you talk me through the	34	14/02/2024

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				<p>systems you've got in place, in terms of that nonadherence?</p> <p>Mr Howard: A staff member obviously has to put in an AUX code. Once that AUX code is entered, staff are on a schedule or a roster. That roster will explain whether they're processing, whether they're on telephony, when they've got their learning and development. If they don't adhere to that schedule, for whatever reason, there is reporting that occurs that will show that the staff member hasn't adhered to their schedule.</p> <p>Senator RICE: What is that reporting? Who is that to?</p> <p>Mr Howard: The team leader gets some level of reporting, and it goes up through various management levels and various aggregated—</p> <p>Senator RICE: Is that level of team leader reporting daily, monthly? How granular is it?</p> <p>Mr Howard: I'd have to take that on notice; I'm not a hundred per cent sure.</p> <p>Senator RICE: The reports in the media were that it was if somebody lost as little as 30 minutes over a one month period. You don't know whether it's on a monthly basis or more granular than that?</p> <p>Mr Howard: Senator, I will take the specifics on notice. The information will be available to a team leader for various time frames. As I think I used in the example, in the team meeting that I sat in on in Brisbane a couple of weeks ago, the team leader that day knew that the day before he had a number of staff members that had not adhered to schedule. In that instance, they were processing staff members and they had just not put themselves into</p>		
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				<p>the right AUX code. In that instance they were new trainees, so they're learning.</p> <p>Senator RICE: So there are reports for particular team members. Are there reports generated for each centre as well?</p> <p>Mr Howard: I'll take that on notice. Not that I see, but I'll take on notice whether or not we report by centre.</p>		
SQ24-000117	Services Australia	Janet Rice	Detailed breakdown of staff breaks – Permanent Staff and Contractors	<p>Senator RICE: Would you accept that what you are saying of supporting a staff member in their performance may be interpreted by that staff member as being oppressive control—limiting their customer lost time, which is basically time that they may need. They may need more than their five minutes of screen time. They might have chronic health issues. They may need to take longer going to the toilet. They may have health issues that require that to happen.</p> <p>Mr Howard: I don't accept that the dashboard leads to those things. But what I would say is that I accept the fact that, if a staff member has some sort of medical condition or something that's out of the ordinary, then it's completely appropriate for them to have a conversation with their team leader about how we can best support them in doing that. Those conversations happen all the time. In a five-hour shift, a staff member gets a number of 5-minute screen-based breaks, they get two 15-minute breaks and they get their lunch break.</p> <p>Senator RICE: Can you take notice those details of all of those breaks? In fact, I asked you that in the questions on notice from last estimates. I did not get an answer to that. You also took notice the</p>	36	14/02/2024

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				<p>conditions that your contractors work under, and I did not get any response to that. Can I ask you again to please take the details of those conditions of both your permanent staff and contractors?</p> <p>Mr Howard: I will take that on notice. Essentially, it's just over a 45-minute period in a five-hour window that a staff member gets to have a break, and that doesn't include the fact that, if they then need to go to the toilet again, can do that. But we'll take the specifics on notice.</p>		
SQ24-000118	Services Australia	Linda Reynolds	NZYQ – SRSS Recipients in Home Detention	<p>Senator REYNOLDS: Before we go to special benefit, of that particular cohort that we've been discussing this morning, the NZYQ cohort, can you tell me how many people are being paid or have been paid by Services Australia?</p> <p>Mr Piazza: The total cohort is in the order of about 149. There were two streams associated with that cohort. One stream was held detention. The other stream was individuals in home detention.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: Could you go over those two cohorts again?</p> <p>Mr Piazza: I suppose they are streams within that cohort.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: Streams, sorry, yes.</p> <p>Mr Piazza: I don't know if that's the appropriate word. There is held detention and home detention. For individuals in home detention, they may already have been in receipt of SRSS payments. For individuals in held detention, that's where Home Affairs, obviously, engaged with us. Of those, about 103 have transitioned to special benefit. It's probably also important to note that it's the choice of the individual on whether or not they engage</p>	37-38	14/02/2024

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				<p>with the agency to test their eligibility for things such as special benefit.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: How often is this benefit paid? Sorry; I might even go back. For the 149 cohort, how many were in held detention and how many were in home detention?</p> <p>Mr Piazza: I don't have the split of that. I can answer the first question, which is that it's paid on a fortnightly basis.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: It's paid fortnightly. Can you tell me what the rate is?</p> <p>Mr Piazza: The rate depends. The rate is set by Home Affairs. There are a range of bands that they actually apply to, and obviously they determine the eligibility of the individual and the rate at which the individual will be paid.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: In terms of the timeliness of the SRSS, you're saying that you have digital communications with Home Affairs about this, and occasionally emails. Is there a standard timeliness metric that you have for SRSS, or is it that, in this case, as soon as they were released they got in touch with Services Australia or you got in touch with them and they got the payment straightaway?</p> <p>Mr Piazza: Home Affairs will engage with a third-party provider to assist these people to, for want of a better word, navigate the system. For people that were in home detention, we obviously knew who they were because they were in receipt of SRSS payments, and we would do an outbound call to them in terms of the change to their visa category.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: You've taken on notice how many between held and home. But those on home</p>		
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				<p>were already on SRSS before they were released from home detention.</p> <p>Mr Piazza: Maybe not all, Senator, but some were.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: If you could take that on notice—</p> <p>Mr Piazza: It's the choice of the individual.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: So a certain amount at home would have been on SRSS already. Can you take on notice, then, the SRSS rate or rates that were applicable for this cohort. For those who were in held detention, you said there was an intermediary. So they're released, an intermediary then is their navigator, and part of that navigation is with Services Australia, correct?</p> <p>Ms Faichney: Yes.</p> <p>Mr Piazza: Just going back a bit, Senator, with questions in terms of the rates, we discussed this with Home Affairs this morning after you raised the questions—I think they're very happy to answer those or for those questions to be referred to Home Affairs in terms of further information. In terms of the intermediary, Home Affairs are responsible for that. They appoint them. We don't have a role in that.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: No, but does the navigator bring one of this cohort into their local Services Australia centre, or do Services Australia reach out to them—to the navigator or to the individual? Who actually makes that contact in the navigation between the 149 cohort and Services Australia?</p> <p>Mr Piazza: It might be a mix of a variety of ways in terms of how we engage with the individuals. Certainly, it's their choice. For those that were in</p>		
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				<p>held detention, we would be waiting for them to engage with the agency. Whether that's the individual making that contact or the third-party provider—it may well be a mix of both.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: Okay. So, while you make the payments, you can't tell me what the rates are.</p> <p>Ms Faichney: They're all set by the Department of Home Affairs. They're listening, so they'll be more than happy to answer the questions when they're—</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: That wasn't my question. While Services Australia physically makes the payments to the cohort of 149, you can't tell me today what the rates are?</p> <p>Ms Faichney: It's a data exchange that comes through from Home Affairs to us to pay them.</p> <p>Mr Piazza: We may not necessarily be making a payment to 149 individuals at the moment.</p> <p>Senator REYNOLDS: Could you take that on notice. How many did receive the SRSS under home detention?, and is that number the same now that they've been released from home detention?</p> <p>Also, can you take on notice how many were in held detention and what payments they received.</p> <p>Ms Faichney: Because we're on the SRSS side of this conversation, that is all Home Affairs. We'll still have to refer all those questions to them for consideration.</p>		
SQ24-000119	Services Australia	Janet Rice	ARO Review Appeals	<p>Senator RICE: That's why I'd like to go into this data and whether you have got reasons as to why some 40 per cent of these reviews are having the original decision changed or overturned.</p>	41	14/02/2024

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				<p>Mr Birrer: As Mr Higgins said, the authorised review officer process is one where the customers engage deeply, and they often provide new or different information than what was in their original claim.</p> <p>Senator RICE: If you could provide on notice what data you've got as to the reasons why decisions are being changed, whether it's administrative error or other reasons—perhaps the list of all the reasons. The other basic question I had is: are all people who request a review granted one?</p> <p>Mr Higgins: They are. We are required under the legislation, if someone requests a review, to undertake the review. It is only the customer that can determine if they would withdraw a review. We can't make that decision.</p> <p>Senator RICE: I note that, in the last financial year, you had 160 authorised officers. Over the last 10 years, you've actually averaged 240, so you've had a drop of a third in your authorised review officers. Why has that occurred?</p> <p>Mr Higgins: We work to a budget, as everyone does. We seek to work within that budget as effectively as we can. We have put in different processes to ensure that we can manage within that ASL—</p> <p>Senator RICE: So, in terms of that drop of a third, then, have the number of reviews changed over the decade? Are you having fewer reviews?</p> <p>Mr Higgins: No, we're not having fewer reviews, but we can deal with them more efficiently if we put in place processes that are different to those of</p>		
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				<p>the last decade. Senator RICE: Can you take on notice whether the wait time and the processing time for reviews has expanded due to that very significant reduction in the number of your authorised review officers? Mr Higgins: Yes, we can take that on notice.</p>		
SQ24-000120	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Paused Automation Processes	<p>Mr Thorpe: The automations that were paused in March 2023 relate to social security and welfare payments—a selection of those. They particularly relate to where automations were dealing with an issue pertaining to discretion in the social security policy in relevant legislation. And the result of that was the agency's undertaking a review of its automation capabilities to make sure we have a good understanding of how they work and that they're consistent with the policy and legal aspects. Particularly we've adjusted our risk tolerances to make sure that we're considering other factors such as ethics, privacy, security and other matters. So the payments that we've paused for automation relate to social security and welfare. I don't have the full list in front of me right now, but I'd be happy to take those on notice, and it's only a selection of those.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: Are there any automation processes in relation to claims processing and payments that are paused at the moment? Mr Thorpe: Yes. There is a selection of payments, but there are only a few. I can come back to you on notice with those particular ones.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: Would they be the same ones that were paused for 12 months? Is there an iteration of pauses? How does that work?</p>	41	14/02/2024

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				<p>Mr Thorpe: They've been paused since March 2023. The only exception to that is that we've continued to work with policy agencies on looking for opportunities to reintroduce automation safely, where it's consistent with the policy and law. A good example of that is working with Home Affairs and NEMA, relating to the AGDRP amendment bill. We're trying to get ready for the high-risk weather season to ensure that we can provide fast payments to customers, particularly when they're eligible. That's a payment we've turned on since the high-risk weather season last year.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: If you could provide details of all of those on notice, that would be great.</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: I'm very happy to do that.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: Could we have information on any specific reasons that relate to why individual processes were paused?</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: Absolutely.</p>		
SQ24-000121	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Crisis Payment Timeliness	<p>Senator KOVACIC: There was one payment in particular that caught my eye. It was the crisis payment, which you've just spoken of as well. According to the assurance statement, the crisis payment for extreme circumstances family and domestic violence payment didn't meet its timeliness standard. Just over 75 per cent of those payments were delivered on time. This payment is, generally speaking, for supporting women and children escaping domestic or family violence. Do you know how many payments actually make up the remaining 25 per cent? How many individuals have been impacted by the late payment of this?</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: I might need to refer to one of my</p>	42	14/02/2024

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				<p>colleagues for that particular question. In terms of your earlier question around automation, I don't believe crisis payments are part of those automations that have been paused.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: Thank you.</p> <p>Mr Howard: I'll just double-check. I'm not sure that I have the information that you're asking for with me today. I can talk to how many crisis payment applications we've received and how many we've completed, but I don't have how many outside of KPIs. I'll have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: Thank you; that would be great.</p>		
SQ24-000122	Services Australia	Perrin Davy	DRA and DRP Payment	<p>Senator DAVEY: I've got a couple of brief questions on a similar topic—the disaster recovery payments and the disaster recovery allowances. I'm happy for you to take these on notice. The minister at the National Emergency Management Agency hearings on Monday night said that more than half of all Australian local government areas had experienced natural disasters and that the government had supported 73 disaster responses across Australia. Could you break down for us how many local government areas and which local government areas received disaster recovery payments and allowances?</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: We'd absolutely be able to provide that. In fact some of that material might have been the material supplied this morning. The other point I'd make is that some of what might have been described by NEMA would also pertain to DRFA, which is the federal and state based payment. We'll be able to describe our response in terms of working with NEMA on AGDRP and DRA.</p>	42	14/02/2024

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				<p>Senator DAVEY: They're the only ones that Services Australia actually distribute.</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: Correct.</p> <p>Senator DAVEY: All the funding arrangements go elsewhere. There was just a bit of a discrepancy—and it might be my mathematics—but the minister said that, in total, the distribution through DRP and DRA was 166 million since July 2022. But NEMA said that, in the same period, 99 million had been distributed through disaster recovery payments and 22 million through the Disaster Recovery Allowance, which, in my mind, only adds up to 121 million. I'm hoping that you have the actual figures in totals from July 2022.</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: From the information I have in front of me, payments made by the agency—again, only relating to AGDRP—amounted to around about \$1.2 billion between 1 July 2022 and 8 February 2024. Perhaps the challenge might be just the different dates that have been used to come up with those particular figures, but we can clarify that on notice for you.</p> <p>Senator DAVEY: So you're saying \$1.2 billion.</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: Yes, 1.1 million claims have been processed by the agency and granted, with \$1.2 billion paid between 1 July 2022 and 8 February.</p> <p>Senator DAVEY: They sound very similar to Mr Moon's figures, so Minister Watt might have got his numbers wrong. That's fine. It would be great if you could confirm that.</p>		
SQ24-000123	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	myGov User Audit Response	<p>Mr Moon: The government response to the myGov user audit was published on 18 December 2023.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: That's right—that was the formal</p>	43	14/02/2024

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				<p>response, but what date did the audit recommend that the government respond by?</p> <p>Mr Moon: I'll have to go and check, but I believe it was within six months, so in 2023, I believe.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: Has that response come? Have you received that response, or have I misunderstood the answer?</p> <p>Mr Moon: Perhaps.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: Basically, my understanding is that, on 18 December 2023, the government unveiled its response to that audit. Was that within the six months of the date that you requested that to occur?</p> <p>Mr Moon: It was later, I believe, and I'll take it on notice to confirm dates. There have been many dates around this. I understand it was later than the date recommended in the user audit.</p> <p>Senator KOVACIC: So it was received on 18 December, which wasn't within the six months.</p> <p>Mr Moon: That's my understanding</p>		
SQ24-000124	Services Australia	Janet Rice	National Relay Service	<p>Senator RICE: Last estimates I asked about the National Relay Service and whether they were subject to the same congestion messaging as other callers. You responded to my question on notice. I understand the National Relay Service dials out from just one number; that's your understanding as well?</p> <p>Mr Howard: I'm not 100 per cent sure, but I know that, if the National Relay Service calls off one number, the congestion parameters will apply to that one number.</p> <p>Senator RICE: That's what your answer to my question on notice said—that the only way deaf or</p>	44-45	14/02/2024

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				<p>hard-of hearing people could get through, if congested messaging was applying, was to use a teletypewriter.</p> <p>Mr Howard: That's my understanding.</p> <p>Senator RICE: Has this been communicated to the National Relay Service and the deaf community?</p> <p>Mr Howard: I'm unsure. I'll have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator RICE: Sounds like that's probably a 'no'.</p> <p>Mr Howard: I don't know.</p> <p>Senator RICE: Okay; take it on notice. Just to clarify: for someone who is deaf and using the National Relay Service, it may be their first call and they will get a message saying, 'You've already called before; goodbye', which is what the congestion message says, because somebody else using that same phone number has tried to call during that period of congestion messaging.</p> <p>Mr Howard: If the same number has been called from while congestion parameters are in place, yes.</p> <p>Senator RICE: How long has the department been aware of this being an issue?</p> <p>Mr Howard: I'll have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator RICE: What are you going to do about it?</p> <p>Mr Howard: It was first raised with me when you asked the question at the last estimates. We've been looking at what we can do from a congestion parameter perspective. I will take on notice where we're at.</p>		
SQ24-000125	Services Australia	Janet Rice	Costs of Debt Correction	<p>Senator RICE: Thank you. On another of my questions on notice, No. 2819, about the cost of correcting errors in payment suspensions or debts, you said there were 24,517 debts or overpayments</p>	45	14/02/2024

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				<p>waived due to an administrative error. Do you have an estimation of the cost to Services Australia, including legal advice, for correcting debts that were incorrectly levelled against participants?</p> <p>Mr Birrer: I'll take on notice any costs. In general they would be done administratively by the staff involved in the debt functions. I will take on notice whether there are any costs associated—</p> <p>Senator RICE: They have waived a lot of debts due to administrative error. If you could take that on notice, and perhaps what the costs have been over the last five years—</p> <p>Mr Birrer: Certainly.</p> <p>Senator RICE: and whether there are actions that Services Australia could take to reduce those costs.</p>		
SQ24-000126	Services Australia	Janet Rice	Homelessness and Mutual Obligations Requirements	<p>Senator RICE: It's very clear from the people contacting me that there are people experiencing homelessness who have not been exempted. Can you take on notice how many exemptions have or haven't been granted for people experiencing homelessness. Would you have that data?</p> <p>Ms Toze: I will take that on notice. We will see if we can get that for you.</p> <p>Senator RICE: I've got some more questions, which I will put on notice, about</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. what training people receive, 2. what the appeals process is if people aren't granted exemptions from their mutual obligations, and 3. what the advice is that the agency and the agency social workers provide to people who are homeless. I understand that they provide advice. 	45	14/02/2024

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SQ24-000127	Services Australia	Janet Rice	Crisis Payment for Gaza War Victim Family Members	<p>Senator RICE: I understand that that payment has now been activated. My question was about people who have been impacted in a similar way by the Israeli government's attacks on Gaza.</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: Services Australia has received instruction from Home Affairs to activate AVTOP for the—</p> <p>Senator RICE: So there isn't an equivalent payment for the people in Gaza.</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: Not at this stage. We have not received instruction from Home Affairs.</p> <p>Senator RICE: Are people who are impacted in the same way—of having family killed in Gaza—entitled to any payment?</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: That question will need to be directed to Home Affairs. Services Australia has not received an instruction as such.</p> <p>Senator RICE: Would they be able to access a Services Australia crisis payment?</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: We'd have to take that question on notice. AVTOP is a very complex payment that involves some very careful and considered engagement with any potential—</p> <p>Senator RICE: Yes. I understand that. What I'm asking about is a more general payment—payments like your crisis payment, like your special benefit payment. Would they be able to apply for those payments on the basis of having had family killed in Gaza?</p> <p>Mr Thorpe: I can check with my colleagues, but I suspect we'll have to take that on notice, because it'll depend on the circumstances. But, to your</p>	46	14/02/2024
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				question, we have not received instructions from Home Affairs.		
SQ24-000128	Services Australia	James McGrath	Artificial Intelligence Use in Services Australia	To what extent is Artificial Intelligence (AI) being utilised in Services Australia?	Written	21/02/2024
SQ24-000129	Services Australia	James McGrath	Artificial Intelligence Use Policies and Procedures	1: Has Services Australia been advised by any federal departments or agencies on how to develop policies and procedures on the utilisation of AI in Services Australia? If so, please table this advice and correspondence. 2: Does Services Australia have any internal policies or procedures relating to the utilisation of AI in Services Australia? If so, please table these internal policies and/or procedures. 3: If there are internal policies or procedures relating to the utilisation of AI in Services Australia, has there been any breaches of these policies and procedures? Please provide de-identified summaries of such breaches since May 2022.	Written	21/02/2024
SQ24-000130	Services Australia	James McGrath	Internal Policies on Artificial Intelligence	Please provide any correspondence, briefing notes, file notes, memoranda, emails, or other records relating to internal policies on AI since May 2022.	Written	21/02/2024
SQ24-000131	Services Australia	James McGrath	Artificial Intelligence Correspondence with Federal Departments	Please provide any briefing notes, file notes, memoranda, emails, or other records relating to correspondence between Services Australia and other federal departments and agencies on AI since May 2022.	Written	21/02/2024
SQ24-000132	Services Australia	James McGrath	Artificial Intelligence Assessments	1: Has Services Australia completed an assessment on the benefits of AI in Services Australia? If so, when was this completed and what is the criteria for assessing a benefit? Please provide a copy of this assessment if applicable. 2: Has Services Australia completed an assessment on the risks that AI poses to the ability for Services	Written	21/02/2024

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				Australia to successfully execute its aims and objectives? If so, when was this completed and what is the criteria for assessing a benefit? Please provide a copy of this assessment if applicable.		
SQ24-000133	Services Australia	James McGrath	Artificial Intelligence Misuse	Are there any cases of staff being reprimanded for the misuse of AI, such as using ChatGPT to complete reports or inputting confidential information into online chat boxes?	Written	21/02/2024
SQ24-000134	Services Australia	Gerard Rennick	TGA Authorisation - COVID-19 Vaccine Claims Scheme	Do people who lodged vaccine injury claims get to see the report from the TGA to Services Australia as to why the TGA believes they should not receive a payout? If not, why not? What qualifications do TGA bureaucrats have to override the opinion of specialists who have diagnosed the patient?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000135	Services Australia	Dave Sharma	RFT 1000919130	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When did the RFT 1000919130: 'Creative & Digital Communication Services Panel' close and how long did it take for Services Australia to assess all applicants? 2. What was the assessment criteria for RFT 1000919130? 3. What organisations were selected under RFT 1000919130, for a period of how long? 4. How many organisations applied but were not selected for RFT 1000919130? 5. Can Services Australia add organisations to the 'Creative & Digital Communication Services Panel' at any time or is it only through a RFT? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If it is only through a RFT, when will the next one occur? 	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000136	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	CSDG Staffing	How many staff in total in FY 2022-23 were redeployed to the Customer Service Delivery Group?	Written	22/02/2024

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SQ24-000137	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Solution Design Projects	With Reference to SQ23-000712, what solution designs have been carried out, and for which projects, over the past 18 months?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000138	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	SSW Processing Timeliness	For each, social security and welfare payment category, list in a table format the number of payments that took longer than six to 17 weeks, 18 to 25 weeks and greater than 26 weeks respectively to process this financial year to date.	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000139	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	APP Costings and Functionalities	1. With reference to SQ23-000716, list the functionalities that are not available in the MyGov App that are available in The Centrelink Express Plus app? 2. With reference to SQ23-000716, what did it cost the agency in FY 2022-23 to maintain The Centrelink Express Plus app?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000140	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Average Progressing Days for SSW Claims	What was the average number of days to process a SSW claim in FY 2021-22 financial year?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000141	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Super Saturday	How many Super Saturday overtime events have been held since 8 November 2023? On average, how many staff have attended each Super Saturday event?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000142	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Claim Timeliness	List per claim type what the timeliness standard is for each and the percentage and number of claims that met the standard in the 2022-23 year and 2021-22 financial year respectively?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000143	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	CEO/acting CEO Messaging	Please table every all-staff message from the CEO/acting CEO from July 2023 to date.	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000144	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Claim Processing	This FYTD, per work type, how many claims took: a) One month to process b) Two to six months to process c) Greater than six months to process	Written	22/02/2024

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SQ24-000145	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	SSW Claims on Hand	Per all SSW claims on hand, and per each work type, what is the average quantum of funding being applied for?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000146	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Number of Service Centres	How many service centres are currently in operation?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000147	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Smart Centre Headcount	In FY 2021-22, what was the APS headcount at each of the Agency's smart centres? This FYTD, what was the APS headcount at each of the Agency's smart centres?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000148	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Precinct	This FYTD, what precincts, if any, have been opened?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000149	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Property Relocation/Consolidation	This FYTD, what properties have been relocated or consolidated?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000150	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Program Management Framework	Can the Agency's program management framework be tabled?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000151	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	In-House Functions	This FYTD, what in-house functions have been outsourced?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000152	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Major Projects	Since August 2023, list the status of each Major Project. For each Major Project and Major Program, list the assurance activities that have been carried out in each over the past 12 months? What is the forecast program expenditure of each Major Project and what is the actual expenditure on each Major Project to date? Which Major Projects have been subject to remediation in the past 6 months? Which Major Projects does the Agency expect will conclude in FY 2023-24?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000153	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	GovERP	Why, at December 2023, was the GovERP project in red status?	Written	22/02/2024

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SQ24-000154	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	HDMP Phase 3	Why, at December 2023, was the HDMP Phase 3 been in red status?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000155	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	System Issues	With reference to SQ23-000723, how many major system issues occurred in FY 2022-23? With reference to SQ23-000723, how many significant system issues occurred in FY 2022-23?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000156	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Digital Coaching	What is the average duration of a digital coaching appointment?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000157	Services Australia	Maria Kovacic	Voice Biometrics	1. With reference to SQ23-000720, answer 2, can the Agency explain what it means by a 'security services platform'? 2. How does the Agency determine which customers are to receive voice biometric enrolments? 3. Why do some customers not receive voice biometric enrolment?	Written	22/02/2024
SQ24-000158	Services Australia	Janet Rice	DSP Eligibility - Long COVID	Senator RICE: I know, but I have just one more tiny one about long COVID and whether Australians with long COVID are eligible for the disability support pension? Mr Flavel: As I think you're aware, the DSP impairment tables were changed to be on the basis of functional impairment, away from the previous diagnostic base. So, if somebody has long COVID and meets the relevant functional impairments, then they could qualify for DSP. In terms of numbers who might have, that's something I'd have to check with Services Australia. Senator RICE: Can you take on notice the number of people for whom long COVID is the reason they have been eligible for the DSP? Mr Flavel: Yes. I would just make the point, though, that the reason they would be eligible is that the	98-99	14/02/2024

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				functional impairment has been assessed. The fact that it might be due to long COVID won't necessarily be captured. It'll be the fact that they've got more than 20 points on the relevant functional impairment tables; that'll be the thing. That being said, I'm very happy for you to ask for that data. Senator RICE: Thank you.		
SQ24-000159	Services Australia	Anne Ruston	Aged Care Claim Processing	For all aged care claims, can the Department please advise the average number of days taken to process a claim, per claim category/service, in FY 2022-23 and 2023-24 to date.	Written	5/03/2024