

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

2024–25 Additional Budget Estimates

27 February 2025

CEO OPENING STATEMENT

- Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to make some brief opening remarks.
- As the Committee is aware, over the past year a key priority for Services Australia has been to lift service delivery performance back to a level that customers – and all Australians – expect.
- We’ve made significant progress.
- Last week we published for the second time a quarterly update on our performance metrics to data.gov.au. We provided a link and step-by-step guidance for accessing the update on data.gov.au to the Committee Secretariat last week.
- And, while on this occasion we did not receive a request for tabling of data from the Committee, we have folders containing the updated data available for committee members.
- We are, of course, ready to answer questions on our performance this evening.
- As previously discussed, taken as a whole year our performance across 2023-24, as reported in our last Annual Report, was poor.
- Today I’m pleased to be able to report to the committee that the progress which began with the onboarding and training of new staff from November 2023 has continued.
- Data for the second quarter of 2024-25 shows we have maintained and in many cases further improved our performance in the second quarter of 2024-25.
- As CEO, I’ve been mindful of the questions about longer term comparisons of performance.
- As previously discussed, comparisons to the COVID years, including the impact of bushfires and severe weather events, are not meaningful. They were extraordinary times where additional resourcing was available to the agency and we put to one-side many of our important business-as-usual service delivery activities to support Australians in desperate need.

- However, given the very reasonable interest in our performance over time, I've looked closely into the period immediately prior those events – 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- I am satisfied the overall experience of most people now waiting for claims to be processed or trying to get through to us on the phone is better than it was then, in most cases substantially better.
- Progress does not mean we're satisfied.
- In many cases, people still wait too long. Our staff across the country continue to work every day to meet the expectations Australians have of us, and we have of ourselves.
- Thank you Chair.