

**Senate Community Affairs Committee
Public Hearing
Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 – Schedule 3
(Disability Support Pension Impairment Tables)
Tuesday 6 September 2011**

Responses to Senator McKenzie

Question 1: Can the department please provide the number and location of JCAs by region – particularly a comparison of urban to rural and regional areas?

Region	Number of Job Capacity Assessors (full time equivalent)	Percentage of Job Capacity Assessors
RA1 Major Cities	468.76	70.43%
RA2 Inner Regional	137.88	20.72%
RA3 Outer Regional	50.21	7.54%
RA4 Remote	8.7	1.31%
Total	665.55	100.00%

The table uses the Australian Bureau of Statistics Remoteness value derived from the ARIA Index (which classifies accessibility ie Highly Accessible, Accessible, Moderately Accessible, Remote and Very Remote).

**Question 2: Can the department provide a breakdown of DSP recipients by region?
And if possible, by disability?**

REMOTE INDICATOR						TOTAL conditions	TOTAL conditions (%)
Major Cities	Inner Regional	Outer Regional	Remote	Very Remote	Postcode Not Mapped		
440,653	212,202	124,620	18,715	12,612	10,048	818,850	100.00%
53.81%	25.91%	15.22%	2.29%	1.54%	1.23%	100.00%	

This data has been categorised using a postcode concordance that has mapped postcodes into major cities, urban, inner regional outer regional. Postcodes are mail delivery constructs and consequently a number of them can't be allocated to a particular region. Therefore the data is only indicative.

DSP MEDICAL CONDITION	
NOT CODED	180
REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM	526
INHERITED DISORDERS	700
SKIN DISORDER & BURNS	789
AMPUTATION	1565
INFECTIOUS DISEASES	2518
UROGENITAL SYSTEM	4880
VISCERAL DISORDER	6100
GASTRO-INTESTINAL SYSTEM	6346
CONGENITAL ANOMALIES	12476
POORLY DEFINED CAUSE	12573
GRANTED PRIOR TO 12/11/91	12656
CHRONIC PAIN	13872
CANCER/TUMOUR	15308
ENDOCRINE & IMMUNE SYSTEM	18501
ACQUIRED BRAIN IMPAIRMENT	20320
SENSE ORGANS	21606
RESPIRATORY SYSTEM	22270
CIRCULATORY SYSTEM	36420
NERVOUS SYSTEM	40172
INTELLECTUAL/LEARNING	96512
MUSCULO-SKELETAL & CONNECTIVE TISSUE	231225
PSYCHOLOGICAL/PSYCHIATRIC	241335
TOTAL	818850

Question 3: How does the department define regional and rural areas for the purpose of DSP?

DSP is a universal payment and FaHCSIA does not define regional and rural areas for DSP purposes.

Question 4: Could regionally based people with disability who are assessed as having some capacity to work be required to relocate from their home community in order to seek employment (that is, would the person be required to take a job that is not in their local community)?

DSP recipients are not required to seek employment, but may do so on a voluntary basis.

DEEWR has portfolio responsibility for Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance and Parenting Payment. However, FaHCSIA understand that job seekers, who have been assessed as having a partial capacity to work, are required to look for work to their capacity, that is within 60 minutes commuting time (90 minutes for other job seekers). Job seekers are not required to relocate.

Question 5: What consideration is given to a person with a disability's access to suitable transport, when that person lives in a regional or rural area where employment is not readily accessible?

No consideration is given to a person's access to suitable transport when eligibility for DSP is assessed. However, Mobility Allowance is available for eligible people with disability who are unable to use public transport without substantial assistance. To be eligible for the standard rate of Mobility Allowance, recipients must be undertaking an approved activity and be required to travel to and from their home for the purpose of undertaking that activity. Approved activities include job search or any combination of gainful employment, voluntary work and vocational training for at least 32 hours every four weeks.

State and territory governments also provide the following assistance for eligible people with disability:

- Taxi subsidy scheme – provides assistance for the cost of using a taxi service.
- Concessions for public transport – Health Care Card and Pensioner Concession Card holders are eligible for concessions on fares.
- Disability parking – provides priority access to parking spaces located close to facilities.

Question 6: Victoria was stated as being chosen as the trial location because of its capacity to undertake the changes required for the trial. How does this reflect upon the capacity of other states to implement the changes?

Victoria was chosen as the site for the trial for logistical reasons. In consultation with DHS, it was determined that there were assessors in Melbourne who had the capacity to undertake the additional work required for the trial. The proximity of assessors also made training and coordination of the trial simpler.

This has no bearing on the capacity of the other states and territories to implement the revised Impairment Tables.