

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 1

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 42

Question Submitted by: Senator Siewert

Question:

When was the decision made to include grandparents in the measure?

Answer:

The Department is unable to answer to this question as it involves the deliberations of Government.

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SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 2

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 43

Question Submitted by: Senator Moore

Question:

Senator Moore This bill has been played around with and then reintroduced in the Senate with the one that we supported. What I am trying to establish is, from the time that the original concept of cutting back FTB B and FTB A—

Ms Halbert: I can tell you right now. The first bill was introduced on 26 November and got royal assent on 11 December 2015. That is the long-named bill No. 1.

Senator MOORE: And the new bill—the one we are looking at today—was introduced on 2 December by the minister in the House of Representatives?

Mr Emerson: That is right.

Senator MOORE: So there was a very short time between the rejection of the first bill and the reintroduction of the second.

Clarification: *The Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill 2015* in its original form was introduced on 21 October 2014, amended and read a second time on 26 November 2015 and received Royal Assent on 11 December 2015.

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Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 3

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 43

Question Submitted by: Senator Siewert

Question:

How much Ministerial correspondence have you had and who have you had Ministerial correspondence from?

Answer:

The Department receives correspondence from a wide range of individuals and organisations regarding many different aspects of Family Tax Benefit. It would not be possible to provide an accurate figure without reviewing the specific content of all correspondence received. The work involved would amount to a substantial and unreasonable diversion of the Department's resources.

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SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 4

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 44

Question Submitted by: Senator Siewert

Question:

When you were looking at the grandparent carer cut-out, was there any consideration given to families with disabilities?

Answer:

As Family Tax Benefit is not a payment specifically for families with disabilities the Department did not specifically consider families with disabilities.

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Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 5

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 44

Question Submitted by: Senator Siewert

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: In terms of children with disability, you came in part way through the previous evidence, so correct me if I am wrong and you did not hear this, but the point was that was made was that it is difficult to get data about the number of families with children with disability that are getting FTB A and B.

Ms Halbert: I did not hear, but although I have not been listening today my staff have been. I have not been back to the office. We would be able to look at families that are receiving carer payments or carer allowance and whether they are also getting FTB. We have not done that, but we would be able to do that. That is not going to give your total population, because they have eligibility criteria. For example, carer allowance is not means tested, so it would give you a broader picture, I would say.

Senator SIEWERT: But you do not have it other than through that data?

Ms Halbert: We do not ask for it in relation to FTB, because it is not a disability-linked payment.

Senator SIEWERT: I understand what you are saying about it not being a disability payment, but is there no other way of finding that out? If you could provide that information it would be good.

Answer:

The method to determine the number of FTB families that have children with a disability is highly complex and would involve a significant amount of time and resources to provide accurate information within the time available. The work involved would amount to a substantial and unreasonable diversion of the Department's resources.

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SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 6

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 45

Question Submitted by: Senator Moore

Question:

It is just a clarification. In terms of the evidence we have had today – I am sure your staff will let you know – at least ACOSS, Welfare Rights, and Catholic social welfare have all said that they have sought modelling from the Department to help them look at the consequences of the impact of the payment. I forgot to ask ACOSS and Welfare Rights what the response was, but Catholic social welfare actually said that they have not had a response. They have formally asked for that modelling and not had a response... Could you check that out, because that is now on record?

Answer:

The Department has no record of a formal request from Catholic Social Services Australia to the Department requesting modelling related to the impacts of measures in the *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015*.

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Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 7

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 46

Question Submitted by: Senator Moore

Question:

Can we get information on notice about exactly where the information in the Minister's speech about 'as a share of GDP' and how we rate with the OECD countries came from?

Answer:

The information came from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Social Expenditure database. The database covers 34 OECD countries for the period 1980-2011 and estimates for 2012-2014 and includes social policy and programme related expenditure for a range of broad categories such as housing, incapacity benefits and families.

The family component of these statistics includes a range public support for families including Family Tax Benefit Part A and Part B and a number of other payments (such as Parental Leave Pay, Partner Allowance and Child Care Benefit) and several family support and relationship programmes. It does not include additional public support that is not exclusively targeted at families such as health benefits and housing support.

The Minister quoted Australian statistics for 2012 which demonstrate that Government spending on family assistance tripled from 0.9 per cent in in 1980 to 2.7 per cent in 2012. Statistics for 2012 are not yet available for all OECD member countries; however, the OECD has released statistics on public spending on family benefits in cash, services and tax measures in 2011. In these statistics, Australia's spending was above the OECD average, ranking 8th in terms of cash benefits for families and 14th in terms of overall benefits.

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18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 8

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 48

Question Submitted by: Senator Siewert

Question:

Was any modelling commissioned for Bill 1 and Bill 2?

Answer:

The Department did not commission any external modelling for the *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill* and the *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No.2) 2015*.

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SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 9

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 49

Question Submitted by: Senator Moore

Question: The other statement made by a number of people giving evidence was that the greatest impact for this range of changes will fall on people at the lower income level. As a generality, is that something that the department agrees with?

Answer: As a result of these reforms:

- around 142,000 families will have their Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part B fortnightly rate increased with a youngest child under one:

Annual income of the family by income bracket

| Family ATI (\$) | FTB Part B recipients* |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 0-40,000 | 66,000 |
| 40,000-80,000 | 56,000 |
| 80,000-120,000 | 20,000 |
| Greater than 120,000 | 0 |

**Figures reflect costing of measure to restructure FTB Part B.*

- around 119,000 single parent families will have their FTB Part B fortnightly rate reduced when their youngest child turns 13:

Annual income of the family by income bracket

| Family ATI (\$) | FTB Part B recipients* |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 0-40,000 | 69,000 |
| 40,000-80,000 | 42,000 |
| 80,000-120,000 | 8,000 |
| Greater than 120,000 | 0 |

**Figures reflect costing of measure to restructure FTB Part B.*

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Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

- Around 44,000 single parent families with a youngest child 17-18 will lose entitlement to FTB Part B:

Annual income of the family by income bracket

| Family ATI (\$) | FTB Part B recipients* |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 0-40,000 | 23,000 |
| 40,000-80,000 | 18,000 |
| 80,000-120,000 | 3,000 |
| Greater than 120,000 | 0 |

**Figures reflect costing of measure to restructure FTB Part B.*

- around 1.5 million FTB Part A families will have their FTB Part A supplements phased out:

Annual income of the family by income bracket

| Family ATI (\$) | FTB Part A recipients |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 0-40,000 | 630,000 |
| 40,000-80,000 | 540,000 |
| 80,000-120,000 | 330,000 |
| Greater than 120,000 | 20,000 |

- around 1.3 million FTB Part B families will have their FTB Part B supplements phased out:

Annual income of the family by income bracket

| Family ATI (\$) | FTB Part B recipients |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 0-40,000 | 620,000 |
| 40,000-80,000 | 460,000 |
| 80,000-120,000 | 200,000 |
| Greater than 120,000 | 60,000 |

Note: The above tables align with customer impacts previously provided in answer to written Questions on Notice, received from Department of Social Services, 26 November 2015 (Question No: 1), in relation to the Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill 2015 19 November 2015. However, the customer numbers have changed slightly to reflect amendments to grandparents and single parents over 60 years of age.

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SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 10

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 49

Question Submitted by: Senator Siewert

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: Did I miss an answer about what further consideration has been given to suggestions—for example, from ACOSS—from people who have been looking at alternatives?

Ms Halbert: I think those representations have been made to the government, so that will be a matter for the government to consider.

Senator SIEWERT: So you have not had discussions on that?

Ms Halbert: I have not had any discussions with—

Senator SIEWERT: Has the department?

Ms Halbert: Not to my knowledge. Again, I would have to take that on notice. I do not believe so?

Answer:

The Department has not had any discussions with ACOSS regarding the alternatives proposed in the Submission ACOSS submitted to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee Inquiry on the *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No.2) 2015*.

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural

Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 11

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 49

Question Submitted by: Senator Siewert

Question:

Regardless of whether it was ACROSS, have you looked at alternative ways of targeting the family tax benefit or addressing the issues of family tax benefit, particularly in line with the conversation you were just having with Senator Moore about the impact on particular cohorts?

Answer:

The Department is unable to answer to this question as it involves the deliberations of Government.

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 12

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 49-50

Question Submitted by: Senator Siewert

Question:

Considering that, and considering that ACOSS have some new suggestions but there are some recommendations they have been making over a long period of time, were those considered when these particular measures were being considered?...

They have their prebudget submission, which they released the other day, but they have had recommendations for reform for quite a long time. Obviously, they update them and some of them are new, but some of the recommendations that they have made on numerous occasions have been in a similar form... Hence my question: given that many of the suggestions—and I am talking about family tax benefit—were certainly made to the last bill, what is the process then for looking at those broader reforms? Or were they considered when these reforms were being made?...

I am not asking for the advice, because I know I will not get it, but have you provided advice to the government on the recommendations that have been made?

Answer:

The Department is unable to answer to this question as it involves the deliberations of Government as part of the Budget process.

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: 13

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 50

Question Submitted by: Senator Moore

Question:

Is there any way we can find out what the difference is between the proposed savings in the first bill and the proposed savings in this bill?

Answer:

The difference in savings between:

- the original Bill, *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill 2015* and
- the amended *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill 2015* and the *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No.2) 2015*

Should *Bill (No.2)* pass in its current form, it would be a difference of around \$55.2 million over the forward estimates (with the original Bill projecting a higher save than the combined save across the amended Bill and Bill 2).

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Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Payments Structural Reform and Participation Measures) Bill (No. 2) 2015

18 February 2016

Outcome Number: Outcome 1

Question No: Additional Question

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard page: 44

Question Submitted by: Senator Siewert

Question:

For the following cameos/family compositions, please provide:

1. The annual financial impact of removing the supplements when fully phased out, and
 2. The annual financial impact of restricting FTB-B accessibility
- Single parent, one child aged 13 years, no private income, Newstart Allowance
 - Single parent, one child aged 13 years, \$70,000 in earnings
 - Couple family, two children aged 14 and 16 years, Parent 1 with \$80,000 in earnings, Parent 2 with \$0 in earnings
 - Couple family, two children aged 14 and 16 years, Parent 1 with \$60,000 in earning, Parent 2 with \$30,000 in earnings
 - Couple family, two children aged 9 months and 3 years, Parent 1 with \$80,000 in earnings, Parent 2 with \$0 (no PPL Pay)

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18 February 2016

Answer:

Single parent, one child aged 13 years, no private income, Newstart Allowance

| Payment | 2018-19 Entitlement Year (no indexation applied)* | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------|----------------------|
| | Pre-reform | Post-reform | Change in Assistance |
| Family Assistance Payments | | | |
| FTB Part A | | | |
| FTB Part A rate | \$6,099.15 | \$6,361.95 | \$262.80 |
| FTB Part A Supplement | \$726.35 | \$0.00 | (\$726.35) |
| FTB Part A Energy Supplement | \$116.80 | \$116.80 | \$0.00 |
| <i>Total – FTB Part A</i> | <i>\$6,942.30</i> | <i>\$6,478.75</i> | <i>(\$463.55)</i> |
| FTB Part B | | | |
| FTB Part B rate | \$2,784.95 | \$1,000.10 | (\$1,784.85) |
| FTB Part B Supplement | \$354.05 | \$0.00 | (\$354.05) |
| FTB Part B Energy Supplement | \$51.10 | \$51.10 | \$0.00 |
| <i>Total – FTB Part B</i> | <i>\$3,190.10</i> | <i>\$1,051.20</i> | <i>(\$2,138.90)</i> |
| Total Family Payments | \$10,132.40 | \$7,529.95 | (\$2,602.45) |
| Income Support Payments | | | |
| Newstart Allowance | \$14,764.25 | \$14,764.25 | \$0.00 |
| Newstart Allowance Energy Supplement | \$247.68 | \$247.68 | \$0.00 |
| Total Income Support Payments | \$15,011.93 | \$15,011.93 | \$0.00 |
| Total Government Assistance | \$25,144.33 | \$22,541.88 | (\$2,602.45) |

This family would also be eligible for up to \$3,956.60 in rent assistance if a private renter.

*The policy settings reflect the entitlements for 2018-19 but use current payment rates, some of which would change with indexation.

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18 February 2016

Single parent, one child aged 13 years, \$70,000 in earnings

| Payment | 2018-19 Entitlement Year (no indexation applied)* | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------|----------------------|
| | Pre-reform | Post-reform | Change in Assistance |
| Family Assistance Payments | | | |
| FTB Part A | | | |
| FTB Part A rate | \$2,304.55 | \$2,567.35 | \$262.80 |
| FTB Part A Supplement | \$726.35 | \$0.00 | (\$726.35) |
| FTB Part A Energy Supplement | \$116.80 | \$116.80 | \$0.00 |
| <i>Total – FTB Part A</i> | <i>\$3,147.70</i> | <i>\$2,684.15</i> | <i>(\$463.55)</i> |
| FTB Part B | | | |
| FTB Part B rate | \$2,784.95 | \$1,000.10 | (\$1,784.85) |
| FTB Part B Supplement | \$354.05 | \$0.00 | (\$354.05) |
| FTB Part B Energy Supplement | \$51.10 | \$51.10 | \$0.00 |
| <i>Total – FTB Part B</i> | <i>\$3,190.10</i> | <i>\$1,051.20</i> | <i>(\$2,138.90)</i> |
| Total Family Payments | \$6,337.80 | \$3,735.35 | (\$2,602.45) |
| Total Government Assistance | \$6,337.80 | \$3,735.35 | (\$2,602.45) |

This family would also be eligible for up to \$3,956.60 in rent assistance if a private renter.

*The policy settings reflect the entitlements for 2018-19 but use current payment rates, some of which would change with indexation.

Couple family, two children aged 14 and 16 years, Parent 1 with \$80,000 in earnings, Parent 2 with \$0 in earnings**

| Payment | 2018-19 Entitlement Year (no indexation applied)* | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------|----------------------|
| | Pre-reform | Post-reform | Change in Assistance |
| Family Assistance Payments | | | |
| FTB Part A | | | |
| FTB Part A rate | \$6,403.70 | \$6,929.30 | \$525.60 |
| FTB Part A Supplement | \$1,452.70 | \$0.00 | (\$1,452.70) |
| FTB Part A Energy Supplement | \$233.60 | \$233.60 | \$0.00 |
| <i>Total – FTB Part A</i> | <i>\$8,090.00</i> | <i>\$7,162.90</i> | <i>(\$927.10)</i> |
| FTB Part B | | | |
| FTB Part B rate | \$2,784.95 | \$0.00 | (\$2,784.95) |
| FTB Part B Supplement | \$354.05 | \$0.00 | (\$354.05) |
| FTB Part B Energy Supplement | \$51.10 | \$0.00 | (\$51.10) |
| <i>Total – FTB Part B</i> | <i>\$3,190.10</i> | <i>\$0.00</i> | <i>(\$3,190.10)</i> |
| Total Family Payments | \$11,280.10 | \$7,162.90 | (\$4,117.20) |
| Total Government Assistance | \$11,280.10 | \$7,162.90 | (\$4,117.20) |

This family would also be eligible for up to \$3,956.60 in rent assistance if a private renter.

*The policy settings reflect the entitlements for 2018-19 but use current payment rates, some of which would change with indexation.

**The 16 year old is assumed to be a full-time secondary student.

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18 February 2016

Couple family, two children aged 14 and 16 years, Parent 1 with \$60,000 in earning, Parent 2 with \$30,000 in earnings**

| Payment | 2018-19 Entitlement Year (no indexation applied)* | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------|----------------------|
| | Pre-reform | Post-reform | Change in Assistance |
| Family Assistance Payments | | | |
| FTB Part A | | | |
| FTB Part A rate | \$4,403.70 | \$4,929.30 | \$525.60 |
| FTB Part A Supplement | \$1,452.70 | \$0.00 | (\$1,452.70) |
| FTB Part A Energy Supplement | \$233.60 | \$233.60 | \$0.00 |
| <i>Total – FTB Part A</i> | <i>\$6,090.00</i> | <i>\$5,162.90</i> | <i>(\$927.10)</i> |
| FTB Part B | | | |
| FTB Part B rate | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| FTB Part B Supplement | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| FTB Part B Energy Supplement | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| <i>Total – FTB Part B</i> | <i>\$0.00</i> | <i>\$0.00</i> | <i>\$0.00</i> |
| Total Family Payments | \$6,090.00 | \$5,162.90 | (\$927.10) |
| Total Government Assistance | \$6,090.00 | \$5,162.90 | (\$927.10) |

This family would also be eligible for up to \$3,956.60 in rent assistance if a private renter.

*The policy settings reflect the entitlements for 2018-19 but use current payment rates, some of which would change with indexation.

**The 16 year old is assumed to be a full-time secondary student.

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18 February 2016

Couple family, two children aged 9 months and 3 years, Parent 1 with \$80,000 in earnings, Parent 2 with \$0 (no PPL Pay)

| Payment | 2018-19 Entitlement Year (no indexation applied)* | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------|----------------------|
| | Pre-reform | Post-reform | Change in Assistance |
| Family Assistance Payments | | | |
| FTB Part A | | | |
| FTB Part A rate | \$3,578.60 | \$4,104.20 | \$525.60 |
| FTB Part A Supplement | \$1,452.70 | \$0.00 | (\$1,452.70) |
| Newborn Supplement | \$523.25 | \$523.25 | \$0.00 |
| Newborn Upfront Payment | \$523.00 | \$523.00 | \$0.00 |
| FTB Part A Energy Supplement | \$182.50 | \$182.50 | \$0.00 |
| <i>Total – FTB Part A</i> | <i>\$6,260.05</i> | <i>\$5,332.95</i> | <i>(\$927.10)</i> |
| FTB Part B | | | |
| FTB Part B rate | \$3,985.80 | \$4,985.90 | \$1,000.10 |
| FTB Part B Supplement | \$354.05 | \$0.00 | (\$354.05) |
| FTB Part B Energy Supplement | \$73.00 | \$73.00 | \$0.00 |
| <i>Total – FTB Part B</i> | <i>\$4,412.85</i> | <i>\$5,058.90</i> | <i>\$646.05</i> |
| Total Family Payments | \$10,672.90 | \$10,391.85 | (\$281.05) |
| Total Government Assistance | \$10,672.90 | \$10,391.85 | (\$281.05) |

This family would also be eligible for up to \$3,956.60 in rent assistance if a private renter.

*The policy settings reflect the entitlements for 2018-19 but use current payment rates, some of which would change with indexation.