

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

2020 - 2021

Division: Retirement Income Policy Division
Topic: Early access super scheme
Reference: Written Question from Senator Gallagher – 24 July 2020, IQ20-000176

Question:

1. When did the Government make the decision to extend the early access super scheme's end date from 24 September 2020 to 31 December 2020?
 - a. Have any changes been made to the administration of the scheme to protect against fraudulent early access to super?
2. Please provide the following figures based on the latest available data point.
 - a. The number of applications and value of applications approved for release from the early access super scheme for FY2019-20, broken down by: age group, gender, state or territory.
 - b. The number of applications and value of applications approved for release from the early access super scheme for FY2020-21, broken down by: age group, gender, state or territory.
 - c. The number of applications and value of applications approved for release from the early access super scheme from current employees of the Australian Public Service or other Australian government agencies.
3. For those who applied to withdraw funds under the early access super scheme for FY2020-21, what proportion had already accessed the scheme for FY2019-20

Answer:

1. The decision to extend the early access to superannuation application date was made in the normal course of Cabinet deliberations as part of the July Economic and Fiscal Update process.

1a. The ATO has extensive integrity measures in place to mitigate the risk of fraudulent early release applications. The ATO continues to actively monitor and refine its controls to mitigate further acts of fraud. Overtime the ATO has implemented enhancements to further increase the end-to-end security and integrity of the early release of superannuation (ERS) program. The ATO now runs additional risk filters over all files before they are delivered to superannuation funds, and provides additional information to funds to assist them in their own fraud prevention processes. The ATO has also improved their communication and exchange of information with superannuation funds and continue to evolve and strengthen their risk controls.

2a and 2b. ATO demographic data

Since the commencement of the measure, a total of 3,895,992 individual applicants have been approved to release \$32.6 billion of their superannuation under the COVID early release measure (data as at 4 August 2020). This comprises 2,453,139 individuals in 2019-20 and 234,383 unique applicants in 2020-21 (data as at 4 August 2020).

Age range	2019-20		2020-21 to date			
	Number of applications approved	Value of applications approved for release (\$m)	Number of unique applications approved	Value of unique applications approved for release (\$m)	Number of applications approved	Value of applications approved for release (\$m)
a. 20 and Less	39,100	110	8,800	25	15,800	40
b. 21-25	292,100	1,660	32,800	201	114,100	650
c. 26-30	455,100	3,330	36,600	285	211,800	1,709
d. 31-35	430,600	3,655	35,000	293	250,000	2,207
e. 36-40	355,100	3,195	30,900	266	232,400	2,118
f. 41-45	276,500	2,545	26,200	230	193,000	1,786
g. 46-50	250,700	2,340	25,200	226	180,700	1,690
h. 51-55	193,100	1,815	20,300	184	139,300	1,310
i. 56-60	121,000	1,135	13,500	121	82,600	777
j. 61-65	36,400	330	4,800	41	21,400	193
k. 66-70	2,800	20	500	4	14,00	11
l. 71 and greater	600	5	100	1	300	2
Unknown	0	-				
Total	2,453,139	20,140	234,383	1,877	1,442,800	12,493

Source: ATO (Data as at 4 August)

Explanatory note: Please note unique approved applications are those that are applying for the first time in tranche 2, i.e. did not apply for early release in 2019-20 (tranche 1). Age is captured by reference to the applicant's age at the time of submitting their application. Application numbers may not add up due to rounding. Application value is rounded to the nearest \$million.

	2019-20		2020-21 to date			
	Number of applications approved	Value of applications approved for release (\$m)	Number of unique applications approved	Value of unique applications approved for release (\$m)	Number of applications approved	Value of applications approved for release (\$m)
Male	1,381,500	11,630	124,700	1,026	836,200	7,416
Female	1,071,300	8,510	110,000	850	606,500	5,077
Other	300	-	-	-	100	-
TOTAL	2,453,139	20,140	234,383	1,877	1,442,800	12,493

Source: ATO (Data as at 4 August). Explanatory note: Please note unique approved applications are those that are applying for the first time in tranche 2, i.e. did not apply for early release in 2019-20 (tranche 1). Application numbers may not add up due to rounding. Application value rounded to the nearest \$million.

	2019-20		2020-21 to date			
State/Territory	Number of applications approved	Value of applications approved for release (\$m)	Number of unique applications approved	Value of unique applications approved for release (\$m)	Number of applications approved	Value of applications approved for release (\$m)
NSW	738,100	5,980	70,400	562	418,800	3,619
VIC	616,800	5,190	55,700	450	307,100	2,667
QLD	556,700	4,470	55,300	437	395,100	3,413
WA	279,800	2,375	26,600	215	167,600	1,464
SA	130,300	1,090	14,100	113	80,600	698
TAS	47,700	390	4,800	38	28,300	242
NT	34,400	275	3,100	25	20,000	170
ACT	23,000	185	2,300	18	11,800	103
Unknown	26,300	185	2,400	19	13,500	118
TOTAL	2,453,139	20,140	234,383	1,877	1,442,800	12,493

Source: ATO (Data as at 4 August)

Explanatory note: Please note unique approved applications are those that are applying for the first time in tranche 2, i.e. did not apply for early release in 2019-20 (tranche 1).

Application numbers may not add up due to rounding. Application value rounded to the nearest \$million.

2c. Data on early release for COVID-19 by occupation or industry of the applicant is not available.

There is a range of circumstances where those who have worked for government may qualify for early release, including:

- Former public servants and defence force personnel - for example, if they left the APS for the private sector and subsequently lost their job, they may qualify as being 'unemployed' or 'redundant';
- Staff, including casuals, employed by national institutions that closed to the public during COVID-19 such as libraries and museums; and

- Current public servants, including part time workers, who also run their own business or have secondary employment may qualify due to reduced hours or turnover during COVID-19.

More broadly, all applicants are required to be truthful in self-certifying that they meet the eligibility criteria and the ATO has advised those who apply for early release to retain evidence to support their application. Severe penalties apply for making a false or misleading statements to the ATO.

3. Please see response to question 2a and 2b.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

2020 - 2021

Division: JobKeeper Division
Topic: Registered liquidators receiving JobKeeper payments
Reference: Written Question from Senator Gallagher – 24 July 2020, IQ20-000177

Question:

How many registered liquidators are currently receiving JobKeeper payments?

Answer:

Data on the number of liquidators receiving JobKeeper is not available.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

2020 - 2021

Division: Market Conduct Division
Topic: Spike in insolvencies
Reference: Written Question from Senator Gallagher – 24 July 2020, IQ20-000178

Question:

What provisions are in place to deal with the expected spike in insolvencies following the end of the special insolvent trading laws?

Answer:

The *Corporations Act 2001* contains a corporate insolvency regime which provides avenues for financially distressed and insolvent companies to be rescued through formal and informal restructuring processes, and where this is not possible, it also contains processes to allow such companies to be wound up. This includes the pre-existing safe harbour for directors from personal liability for insolvent trading.