

**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**  
Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic 2020

**QUESTION ON NOTICE/ Spoken**

**012 – Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 – 24 September 2020**

**Topic: Hardship loans**

**Senator Keneally and Senator Gallagher**

**Question**

KENEALLY: How many people have received grants?

Mr VENUGOPAL: I don't have a number of people that have received grants, I do have a total dollar figure of \$470,847 that's been paid out since the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September.

KENEALLY: You can't tell me how many?

Mr VENUGOPAL: I can get that for you.

KENEALLY: How many people have gotten loans?

Mr VENUGOPAL: Senator, during this financial year, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July to 23<sup>rd</sup> September we have provided 220 loans at a total value of \$330,516. Out of that, 130 loans are directly related to COVID-19 and \$299,769 is the dollar value for that.

GALLAGHER: Just jumping in on the grants, do you know the average grant payment?

Mr VENUGOPAL: I don't have that with me.

**Answer**

During the period 2 September to 23 September, DFAT committed **\$470,847** for **90** grants for repatriation purposes (airfares). During this period, DFAT also committed **\$32,500** for **16** grants for subsistence purposes.

The actual grant amount in each instance varies depending on applicant circumstances, including family size and make-up, port of origin, and capacity of the consular client to contribute; and whether the grant is for subsistence or repatriation purposes, or both.

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**Senator Rice**

**Question**

RICE: Can you tell me the date of when payments were first approved and start flowing?

Dr WEBSTER: I'll have to take that second part on notice. Obviously the fund was announced on 2 September as the Secretary said, I'll take on notice the first date of a payment.

**Answer**

The first payment under the Government's hardship program was issued by DFAT on 11 September 2020.