

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee inquiry into the Social Services (Administration) Amendment (Income Management and Cashless Welfare) Bill 2019

PUBLIC HEARING – 18 MARCH 2019
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee inquiry into the Social Services (Administration) Amendment (Income Management and Cashless Welfare) Bill 2019

Question reference number: SQ19-000186

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Type of Question: Spoken. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 25 March 2019

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: If you could, that would be very much appreciated. In terms of the exemptions, did you take on notice—are you able to provide a breakdown? When you say 'wellbeing exemptions', do you keep records of what basis of wellbeing people were given exemptions on? If so, are you able to provide it? Is it the vulnerabilities that are part of the system of classifying people, or—

Ms Patrick: I can't break down the number into detail, but what we look for is if the CDC program is having a serious negative impact on the participant's mental, physical or emotional wellbeing. We're able to do that in different ways, but the primary avenue is to have them meet with a social worker from the Department of Human Services, and then we are able to make it official through that process.

Answer:

The Department is unable to provide a further breakdown of the reason why each participant was provided a wellbeing exemption. Reasons for exemptions are only captured under the one category of whether the Cashless Debit Card is seriously affecting a person's mental, physical or emotional wellbeing.