

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

**Topic:** Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 - Written Question - 19

**Question reference number:** SQ20-000444

**Senator:** Katy Gallagher

**Type of Question:** Written. Hansard Page/s:

**Date set by the Committee for the return of answer:** 2 June 2020

**Question:**

How many people have been receiving Rent Assistance in each week since the state of March, and how many applications for Rent Assistance have been on hand each week?

a. How does this compare to the same period in 2019?

**Answer:**

**Rent Assistance number of recipients since March 2020\***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Recipients**</b>	<b>% change from previous week</b>
20 March 2020	1,316,988	-
27 March 2020	1,320,851	0.29
3 April 2020	1,352,336	2.38
10 April 2020	1,405,025	3.90
17 April 2020	1,466,449	4.37
24 April 2020	1,536,407	4.77
1 May 2020	1,608,262	4.68
8 May 2020	1,650,259	2.61
15 May 2020	1,663,181	0.78
22 May 2020	1,681,954	1.13

\*Weekly data for Rent Assistance recipients only started being collected on 20 March 2020.

\*\* Number of Rent Assistance recipients are counted by income units. An income unit comprises a single person (with or without dependent children) or a couple (with or without dependent children). Single social security recipients living together in the same household are regarded as separate income units.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance is accessible by eligible Family Tax Benefit recipients as well as those on primary payments.

As noted above, as Rent Assistance recipient data only started being collected weekly from 20 March 2020, there is no comparative weekly data for 2019 as data was collected quarterly in 2019.

As at 29 March 2019, 1,294,433 income units received Rent Assistance.

Data is not available for the number of Rent Assistance applications on hand each week because Rent Assistance is not claimed separately. Eligibility for Rent Assistance is assessed when a person claims an eligible primary income support payment such as JobSeeker Payment.