

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee, Consistent Waiting Periods for New Migrants- Bill 2021

Public Hearing – 13 September 2021
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee, Consistent Waiting Periods for New Migrants- Bill 2021 - Hearing 13 September 2021.

Question reference number: IQ21-000109

Senator: Polley

Type of Question: Spoken. **Hansard Page/s:** 40

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 17 September 2021

Question:

Senator POLLEY: Under the current arrangements, how many people per year access the NARWP exemptions because of substantial unforeseen circumstances and get a special benefit like we've been talking about?

Mr Flavel: We identified that as a question that might be of interest to the committee, so we will take that on notice. We don't have it at the moment but we will seek to get it for you on notice.

Senator POLLEY: Can you take these on notice, then: how many are predicted to meet the exemption criteria each year, if this bill passes, for the forward estimates; how many people are granted an exemption because they lost their job in the pandemic; and how many applications have been in the last year, and how many were approved and how many were rejected? Have you got those figures?

Mr Flavel: On how many applied and how many were rejected: those are things we'll need to follow up with Services Australia.

Senator POLLEY: And, currently, how many people a year are getting an exemption for the NARWP because they've become a lone parent?

Mr Flavel: We're happy to take those questions on notice and get back to the committee with those responses as expeditiously as possible.

Answer:

Payment expenditure estimates include an assumption that one per cent of each annual migration program intake will claim and be granted Special Benefit due to a substantial change of circumstances exemption from the Newly Arrived Resident's Waiting Period (NARWP).

In the 2019 calendar year, 414 people were granted Special Benefit under the substantial change in circumstances exemption from the NARWP. It is not possible to provide rejections due to the NARWP where the person was assessed as not meeting the substantial change of circumstances exemption because this reason is not recorded in the system. 4,291 people were granted Parenting Payment Single or Newstart Allowance under the lone parent exemption from the NARWP.

Data for the 2020 calendar year is impacted by temporary policy changes in response to COVID-19 because the NARWP was waived from 25 March 2020 to 31 March 2021.