

**Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee**

**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Social Services Portfolio**

**Department of Social Services**

**2024-25 Supplementary Budget Estimates**

**Topic:** Social Security Debts - Legislation

**Question reference number:** DSS SQ24-001047

**Question asked by:** Penny Allman-Payne

**Outcome Number:** 1 - Social Security

**Type of Question:** Written

**Hansard Page/s:** N/A

**Date set by the Committee for the return of answer:** 19 December 2024

**Question:**

Why is there no legislation before the parliament to reinstate a statute of limitations on social security debts when this was one of the key recommendations of the Robodebt Royal Commission?

Will the government put forward other legislation about debt recovery?

- What about the abolition of the 10% recovery fee?
- interest charges on debts?
- making non-recoverable debts that arise out of administrative error?

**Answer:**

The Government agreed in principle to the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme report recommendation 18.2: Reinstate the limitation of six years on debt recovery.

The Government will improve social security debt arrangements and is committed to ensuring debt raising and recovery is undertaken in a timely, fair and respectful manner.

Any reform to the approach of raising and recovering social security debts should be undertaken in a systematic way, with careful consideration of the unique circumstances of social security debtors. The Government will carefully consider options for legislative reform, including appropriate statutory limitation periods for the raising and recovery of social security debts to comprehensively address the issues identified by the Royal Commission.