

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 25 OCTOBER 2018 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Debt recovery

Question reference number: HS 161 (SQ18-000210)

Senator: Watt

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 December 2018

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) How many debts have been raised through the OCI?
- b) How many of these debts have been reduced when they have been challenged or for other reasons?
- c) How many of these have been cleared completely?
- d) How many debts raised through the OCI use an averaging algorithm?
- e) How many of the debts raised in this way have been reduced or cleared when challenged, or for any other reason?
- f) How many individuals are getting phone calls regarding debt related to payments received in the financial year 2011–2012 (so over 6 years ago)?

Answer:

For period 1 July 2016 to 31 October 2018:

Number of Debts	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19²
a) Number of Debts Raised ¹	142,634	163,685	103,253
b) Debts Reduced to Non-Zero	16,474	5,748	7,666
c) Debts Reduced to Zero	9,364	2,929	2,328
Number of Debts Averaged			
d) and e) This information is not readily available. The Department cannot readily separate debts raised using an average apportionment from debts raised using a defined pay period. A debt is calculated in a number of ways using the best available information. This may include information provided by the customer, the Australian Taxation Office or a combination of both.			
Customer Contact			
f) The Department is no longer initiating compliance reviews for customers' employment income information for the 2011–12 financial year.			

¹ One Assessment can lead to multiple debts if the recipient has been the beneficiary of different types of income support payments.

² As at 31 October 2018.