

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2015-16 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 1.9 Income Support for Carers

Question No: SQ16-000251

Topic: Carers

Hansard page: 48

Senator Katy Gallagher asked:

So could you on notice just have a look at that 14 per cent figure over the past decade and how it relates to the Commission of Audit figure that was used, which I presume has picked up data from your department along the way? We are not quite sure what the projected growth is. You have not done any work on projected growth over the next decade? Could you do it for carers payments as a whole? I understand you are doing some work around that, as implied in the article quoting the minister. My question relates to whether there have been parameters around the work you are doing—high-level principle work around any changes that would be made.

Answer:

The average annual growth in payments to carers (including Carer Payment, Carer Allowance, Carer Supplement and Child Disability Assistance Payment) over the ten year period from 2004-05 to 2013-14 was 14 per cent. The following table provides more detail on the pattern of expenditure over that period.

TOTAL CARER PAYMENTS - Growth 2004-05 to 2013-14

2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
2,171,447 ²	2,479,225 ²	2,757,082 ²	3,418,126 ²	4,290,648 ²	3,901,032	4,946,397	5,569,399	6,116,963	6,844,807
	14%	11%	24%	26%	-9% ¹	27%	13%	10%	12%

¹The reduction in expenditure in 2009-10 is due to there being no Carer Supplement in that year. The Carer Supplement was paid in June 2008 and then again in July 2010 and has been paid in July each year thereafter.

²The expenditure for payments to carers includes bonus payments from 2004-2008 and the 2008-09 Economic Security Strategy payments.

The projected average annual growth over the forward estimates period (2015-16 to 2018-19) is anticipated to be around 7 per cent.

The Commission of Audit report figures are based on projections from the 2013-14 MYEFO. Queries regarding the Commission of Audit and their projections should be directed to the Department of Finance.

The work the Department is currently undertaking is a project to introduce a new, more contemporary assessment process for access to Carer Payment and Carer Allowance. It is described on the Department's website at the following link:

<https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/benefits-payments/improved-assessment-process-for-carer-payment-and-carer-allowance>