

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 2 MARCH 2017 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Errors – reporting to the Minister

Question reference number: 12 (HS 12)

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard pages 24-25

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 21 April 2017

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: In relation to your answer to one of my questions on notice about the numbers of errors from the agency: when I asked for how many, you said that that is not recorded.

Ms Campbell: Was this an answer to a question on notice at the last hearings, Senator?

Senator SIEWERT: Could you also answer: how often do you report to the minister about errors that the department has made?

Ms Campbell: We will take that on notice, Senator. But on occasions where there is a case that comes forward, we very clearly tell the minister when we have made an error—so it is not something we hide.

Senator SIEWERT: I am wanting to understand: does the minister know the number of errors that have resulted in overpayments or mistakes for customers?

Ms Campbell: We will take that, Senator.

Answer:

The Department does not systematically collect information that would answer this specific question. The Department reports the detail of individual cases to the Minister as part of the normal administration of the Department. In reporting the case, the Department outlines the circumstances that have led to the case, including whether errors were made. The Department pays particular attention to service recovery. The answer to question on notice 13 (HS 13) provides information about errors that have led to a debt.