

## Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

### ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 2 MARCH 2017 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Department of Human Services

**Topic:** Centrelink Wait Times

**Question reference number:** 32 (HS 36)

**Senator:** Watt

**Type of question:** Written

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

**Number of pages:** 1

#### **Question:**

- a) Is the published wait times, the time a person is waiting for a staff member to answer the call?
- b) If that person is then put back on hold (for whatever reason) is that wait time recommenced or is it added to the original time?
- c) What is the percentage of calls that have their issue dealt with in the first contact?

#### **Answer:**

- a) Published average speed of answer<sup>1</sup> is the time from when the person enters the queue to when a staff member answers the call.
- b) If a call is put back on hold, it stays with the original staff member and there is no further time recorded.
- c) 100 per cent of calls are dealt with in the first contact as the Department provides the customer with a response to their enquiry on answering the call. If the customer's circumstances are complex or further specialist assistance is needed, for example a social worker or multilingual services, then the call is transferred internally. The average rate for Centrelink call transfers is 26 per cent.

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Human Services uses the term average speed of answer (rather than call wait time) to denote the length of time before a call is answered.