

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 2 JUNE 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Automatically Generated Notices

Question reference number: HSW 27

Senator: Boyce

Type of question: Written

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Question:

What mechanism does the department have in place where a person's record has been flagged to say they are not required to attend interviews or work until such times as a certain event occurs - such as the passing away of a terminally ill family member - to halt the automatically generated notices of the requirement to report to a Centrelink office and/or attend an employment interview?

Answer:

There is no mechanism to cease all automatically generated advices to customers in receipt of an exemption, except in very extreme circumstances (such as national disasters).

Customers experiencing difficult circumstances (e.g. bereavement) may be granted a temporary exemption from their usual agreed participation requirements. This means a person is not required to undertake looking for work or other activities outlined in their Employment Pathway Plan, for the duration of the exemption period.

During the exemption period, a customer will not be required to attend appointments with their employment services provider and/or attend job interviews, but may choose to do so if they wish.

However, customers will need to continue to report to Centrelink and attend appointments relating to their income support payment eligibility, such as Personal Contact Interviews, although this will usually be on a reduced basis. As such, customers will continue to receive correspondence from Centrelink in accordance with legislative requirements to notify customers of their reporting and appointment requirements.