

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 2 JUNE 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Child Support Program – Debt Enforcement

Question reference number: HS 14

Senator: Fifield

Type of question: Hansard page 77

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 22 July 2011

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) **Senator FIFIELD:** How many complaints has the CSA received in the year to date relating to debt enforcement issues?

Ms Godwin: I would have to take on notice the number relating to debt enforcement issues, although I should note that we are seeing a steady decline in escalated complaints and that would cover both paying parents and receiving parents. We are making a concerted effort to try to improve our service at the front end so people do not have to complain.

Senator FIFIELD: Could you also take that on notice the previous two financial years?

- b) **Senator FIFIELD:** Do you break that down by categories of complaint?

Ms Godwin: We do break it down by categories of complaint but I would need to see whether we can break it into the categories that you talk about. People commonly complain for example if we have not taken what they regard as sufficient action to get their child support. We used to see complaints about service officer behaviour, although pleasingly that has dropped right down the list of the sources of complaint. We would need to see whether we could break it into specific complaints about enforcement action.

Answer:

- a) In the 2010-11 financial year to 31 May 2011, 1,800 complaints have been received regarding debt enforcement issues.
In the 2009-10 financial year, 2,355 complaints about debt enforcement issues were received.
In the 2008-09 financial year, 3,192 complaints about debt enforcement issues were received.

b) These complaints can be broken down into the following categories.

Category of Complaint	08-09 Financial Year	09-10 Financial Year	10-11 Year-to-Date
General	778	711	555
Centrelink deductions	271	96	71
Departure Prohibition Orders	72	55	47
Department of Veterans' Affairs deductions	2	0	0
Employer Withholding	555	417	332
Employer Withholding Arrangements	350	255	204
Lodgement Enforcement	30	2	3
Litigation fines and cost	55	54	22
Late payment penalties	155	111	14
S120 and S161	22	15	11
S72A	427	309	227
Tax refund Intercepts	475	330	314
TOTAL	3,192	2,355	1,800