

## Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

### BUDGET ESTIMATES - 2 JUNE 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Human Services Portfolio

**Topic:** Centrelink Customer Hotline

**Question reference number:** HS 26

**Senator:** Fifield

**Type of question:** Hansard pages 91-92

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

**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

**Senator FIFIELD:** Have there been any disruptions to Centrelink's hotline within the last 12 months?

**Mr Tidswell:** The Customer Relation Unit hotline?

**Senator FIFIELD:** Yes?

**Mr Tidswell:** Not that I am aware of, other than problems maybe with outages, telecommunications that go down from time to time, as happens. I do not have any specific details of outages.

**Ms Lewin:** I have a hazy recollection of a short-term outage some months ago.

**Senator FIFIELD:** What constitutes a short-term outage—half an hour, an hour, a day?

**Ms Lewin:** Probably a couple of hours.

**Senator FIFIELD:** Could you take on notice if there have been others, and what the duration was?

#### **Answer:**

The Centrelink Customer Relations hotline was disrupted due to telephony issues on five individual occasions (as detailed in the table below) between 1 July 2010 and 3 June 2011, for a combined total of less than eight hours.

Centrelink Call continues to work closely with the telecommunications provider to monitor the telephony system and quickly resolve issues that arise.

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Disruption details</b>                                       | <b>Total disruption duration (minutes)</b> | <b>Customer experience</b>   |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| 24/10/2010  | Intermittent calls 'dropping out'.                              | 90   | Call answered by the Centrelink IVR* and placed in queue but is disconnected prior to presentation to a Customer Service Advisor.  |
| 25/10/2010  | Intermittent calls 'dropping out'.                              | 80   | Call answered by the Centrelink IVR and placed in queue but is disconnected prior to presentation to a Customer Service Advisor.   |
| 29/11/2010  | Customers unable to directly access Customer Relations hotline. | 110  | On calling Centrelink, customers may have received a 'busy' signal or been directed to an incorrect business line, requiring transfer back to a Customer Relations Customer Service Advisor. |
| 9/12/2010   | Intermittent calls being terminated in the IVR.                 | 135  | Call answered by the Centrelink IVR but disconnected before transfer to a Customer Service Advisor.  |
| 29/03/2011  | Customers unable to directly access Customer Relations hotline. | 50   | On calling Centrelink, customers may have received a 'busy' signal or been directed to an incorrect business line, requiring transfer back to a Customer Relations Customer Service Advisor. |
|             | <b>TOTAL (minutes)</b>  | <b>465</b>                                 |  |
|             | <b>TOTAL (hours)</b>  | <b>7.75</b>                                |  |

\* IVR = Interactive Voice Response