

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 4 JUNE 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Staff Safety and Security

Question reference number: HS 26

Senator: Furner

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Question:

Senator FURNER: I take your comment about the greater clientele. Particularly in my home state of Queensland, with job losses now approaching 25,000 as a result of the decisions the state government has made up there, the flow-on effect that I guess it has is people accessing the services of Human Services—initially to make contact about what their entitlements are. I am just trying to get some figures around whether there are cases of persons pressing a distress alarm as a result of an irate customer, or whether there are stats on calls to the police for assistance and those sorts of things. If you cannot provide them tonight, I would like to have them on notice to get some indication—across the whole of the nation but particularly in Queensland—of what might be occurring in respect of some of those increases of unemployment or loss of service entitlements.

Mr Tidswell: We certainly could take that on notice. We do not have that level of data with us this evening.

Answer:

Reported instances of customer aggression resulting in the use of duress alarms and/or police call outs have remained fairly constant over the first six months of 2013. When compared to the data for 2012, the national trend has been slightly downward.

In Queensland, the alarm activations for the first six months of 2013 have trended up marginally and police call outs have trended slightly down.