

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Social Services Portfolio
2014-15 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 1

Question No: 386

Topic: Exemptions to non-payment period

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Will individuals who are temporarily unable to seek employment or study due to the following reasons still have to serve the extra waiting periods?

(a) temporary incapacity

(b) other temporary exemption from activity requirements such as domestic violence or a family emergency? If so, how many people will be affected (broken down by (a) and (b)), over each of the forward estimates years?

Answer:

Currently, under the *Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill 2014* (the Bill), exemptions to the waiting period will be available for people who have a partial capacity to work less than 30 hours a week, parents with a Family Tax Benefit child, part time apprentices, principal carer parents, a job seeker with significant barriers to employment under the current employment services arrangements (or the Remote Jobs and Communities Programme equivalent), and Disability Employment Services participants.

Payments made under the Farm Household Support Scheme are not subject to the measure.

At present, section 542A of the *Social Security Act 1991* (the Act) exempts people who are temporarily incapacitated for work from the activity test for Youth Allowance. Section 603C of the Act exempts people who are temporarily incapacitated for work from the activity test for Newstart. There is no provision within the Bill to alter either of these exemptions from the activity test. Treatment of people temporarily incapacitated may be addressed via disallowable instrument.

The department is unable to identify the numbers affected based on the categories provided.