

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

Outcome Number: 1

Question No: 549

Topic: Disability Support Pension Reviews

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Provide the list of exemptions available for DSP recipients who wish to extend their stay overseas above the 4 weeks allowed.

Answer:

The measure includes provisions to allow a Disability Support Pension (DSP) recipient additional periods of portability (up to 28 days) where a DSP recipient has insufficient portability available to cover an absence in the event of an acute family crisis (such as family illness or death) or for a humanitarian purpose (such as overseas legal proceedings or adoption).

There is discretion to extend the limited portability period for DSP recipients who:

- are overseas, and
- cannot return to Australia before the limited portability period ends, and
- are not able to return because an extreme event or emergency situation prevents their return, or
- are receiving financial assistance under the Medical Treatment Overseas Program (MTO) in respect to the person's absence from Australia or needs to accompany such a person.

Severely disabled DSP recipients who are in the terminal phase of an illness can have unlimited portability if they are departing permanently to their country of origin, or to be with, or near, a family member.

Severely disabled DSP recipients may be entitled to a discretionary portability extension if they have a family member, who they are wholly or substantially dependent on, that has been posted overseas for work.

A DSP recipient whose overseas absence is for the purpose of undertaking overseas study as a part of a full-time Australian course may be paid for the duration of the overseas study as long as the study can be credited towards their Australian course.

DSP recipients with a severe and permanent impairment and no future work capacity are eligible for indefinite portability of their pension.

There are special arrangements that will apply to DSP recipients who have booked and paid for travel prior to 13 May 2014. These arrangements will allow their DSP to be paid outside Australia for up to six weeks for trips that commence after 1 January 2015 and conclude before 31 December 2015.