

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 1 JUNE 2017 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Community Development Program

Question reference number: HS 54 (SQ17-000135)

Senator: Watt

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 21 July 2017

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Can you provide an estimate as to how many more penalties would have been applied to CDP participants last year, had DHS not been involved in making these decisions?
- b) What reasons are given by DHS for rejecting proposed breaches from CDP providers?
- c) How does Centrelink conduct assessments in remote communities? What proportion of the total CDP related assessments are done by telephone? What proportion are done face to face?
- d) What is the total amount of money that goes back into consolidated revenue as a result of CDP breaches?
- e) What proportion of CDP participants who are breached and have payments suspended do not re-engage with Centrelink and receive future payments?

Answer:

- a) The Department is not able to provide an estimate on this. Job seeker compliance decisions made by the Department are based on individual circumstances and are made under Social Security Law.
- b) The top ten reasons for rejecting reported failures in CDP are:
 - An outstanding Comprehensive Compliance Assessment on record at the time the failure was generated. Policy requires the Department reject all outstanding failure investigations (without investigation of reasonable excuse) in these cases.
 - The failure was incorrectly reported by the CDP provider.
 - The job seeker's Participation Report was returned to the CDP provider because it contained insufficient evidence/documentation to enable a full investigation of the reported failure.
 - The job seeker was not on payment at the time of the failure and therefore was not subject to mutual obligation requirements.
 - The requirement was not supported by the Job Plan. For example, the failure was related to a provision in the plan which was voluntary rather than compulsory.
 - The job seeker's medical condition prevented them from complying with the mutual obligation requirements (no medical evidence supplied).
 - The job seeker's medical condition prevented them from complying with mutual obligation requirements (evidence such as a medical certificate was provided).

- Bereavement related to a family member.
 - The requirement that the job seeker failed to meet was not supported by policy and therefore no failure could be applied.
 - The job seeker genuinely misunderstood or confused the requirement.
- c) All job seeker compliance investigations, including for CDP, are conducted by telephone.
- d) The Department is not able to answer this question.
- e) The Department does not capture data on job seekers who do, or do not, reclaim payment after having been cancelled following suspension for failing to comply with requirements.