

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2017-18 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number: 1.10 Working Age Payments**

**Question No: SQ17-000507**

**Topic: Drug testing**

**Hansard page: Written**

**Senator Rachel Siewert, asked:**

Could the Department outline in detail the advice received that the collection, means of collection and use of personal information attained from income support recipients is in accordance with Australian privacy law and the Australian Privacy Principles?

**Answer:**

The *Privacy Act 1998* regulates how personal information is handled, and includes 13 Australian Privacy Principles which apply to most Australian Government agencies. The Privacy Principles are designed to guide Government and large organisations in making sure their policies provide for the open and transparent management of the personal information they handle.

The Privacy Principles provide that personal information may be collected, used and disclosed where required or authorised under an Australian law. The social security law contains specific provisions regarding the protection of personal information. Personal information about social security recipients may be obtained or recorded, used or disclosed in limited circumstances in accordance with the confidentiality provisions in Division 3, Part 5 of the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999*.

This includes for the purposes of administering the social security law; for research, statistical analysis or policy development; and where it has been certified as being in the public interest.

The Department of Social Services is conducting a Privacy Impact Assessment in conjunction with the Department of Human Services as part of the implementation of the drug testing trial.