

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

Outcome Number: 1.8 Income Support for People with Disability Question No: SQ17-000516

Topic: Removal of Impairment Table 6

Hansard page: Written

Senator Rachel Siewert asked:

How many people who have a disability caused by drug or alcohol addiction will be denied DSP because they haven't sought treatment? Will this apply to people who have a disability that cannot be treated?

Answer:

All medical conditions, including conditions caused by drug or alcohol addiction, must meet the legislative definition of 'permanent' before they can be assessed under the Social Security (*Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension*) Determination 2011 (the "Impairment Tables"). 'Permanent' means a condition has been fully diagnosed, treated and stabilised, and in light of available evidence, it is more likely than not to persist for more than two years.

The requirements for a condition to be considered fully diagnosed, treated and stabilised are set out in Section 6 of the Social Security (*Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension*) Determination 2011 (available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2011L02716>).

An estimated 450 fewer people will be granted DSP each year as a result of these changes. The proportion of these people who will not be eligible specifically due to not meeting the requirement to be fully treated, or due to not meeting the requirements of fully stabilised which includes needing to undertake reasonable treatment, has not been separately estimated.

The instrument that would have removed Table 6 – Functioning Related to Alcohol, Drug and Other Substance Use from the Impairment Tables, the Social Security (*Tables for the Assessment of Work-related Impairment for Disability Support Pension*) Amendment Determination 2017, was disallowed in the Senate on 21 June 2017.