

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2010-11 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 2

Question No: 099

Topic: Rent Assistance

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

Since 1997 a special “sharers” rate for Rent Assistance has been applied to Youth Allowance, Newstart and Age Pensioners sharing. Please provide a breakdown of the number of people currently affected by this rule and the rationale for its use.

Answer:

The sharer’s rate for Rent Assistance was introduced to address inequities in the rates of payment between couples and single people sharing accommodation. It acknowledges that single people who share accommodation have the opportunity to benefit from economies that are not available to those who live on their own. If a recipient's calculated rate of Rent Assistance is below the sharer's maximum rate, the recipient is unaffected by the sharers provisions.

The number of sharers by primary payment type as at June 2010 is as follows:

<i>Primary payment type</i>	<i>Number of income units</i>
Age Pension	23,203
Austudy	9,092
Newstart Allowance	71,198
Youth Allowance	53,759
Other	3,968
Total	161,220