

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 23-24 OCTOBER 2014 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Member of a Couple Issues

Question reference number: HS 38

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12 December 2014

Number of pages: 3

Question:

- a) How many “Member of a Couple” decisions were appealed at each level of appeal, in 2013-14?
- b) For Member of a Couple appeals for the year 2013-14, please provide a breakdown of the outcome of appeals, by level of appeals. Provide both numbers and percentages of outcomes of the appeals, measured against all MOC appeals only.
- c) For Member of a Couple overpayments for the year 2013-14, please provide a breakdown by amount of debt:
 - 1) under \$2,000;
 - 2) \$2,001- \$5,000;
 - 3) \$5,001-\$10,000;
 - 4) \$10,001 to \$20,000;
 - 5) \$20,001 to \$50,000;
 - 6) \$50,001 to \$100,000;
 - 7) \$100,001- \$150,000; and
 - 8) over \$150,001.
- d) For 2013-14, how many Member of a Couple cases were prosecuted by the Commonwealth Department of Public Prosecutions?
- e) How many members of a couple reviews were completed in 2012-13 and 2013-14, and how many debts were raised in each of these years.

Answer:

- a) ‘Member of a Couple’ decisions – appeals lodged in 2013-14, by level of appeal:

Jurisdiction	Applications/Lodgements
Review Officer	2,593
Social Security Appeals Tribunal	231
Administrative Appeals Tribunal (Customer Appeal)	55
Administrative Appeals Tribunal (Secretary Appeal)	3
Grand Total	2,882

b) 'Member of a Couple' decisions appealed in 2013-14, by level of appeal and outcome:

Jurisdiction	Decisions	Changed Decisions *	% of Decisions Changed
Review Officer	2,895	1,397	48%
Social Security Appeals Tribunal	242	86	36%
Administrative Appeals Tribunal (Customer Appeal)	42	16	38%
Administrative Appeals Tribunal (Secretary Appeal)	1	1	100%
Grand Total	3,180	1,500	47%

* Review Officer, Social Security Appeals Tribunal and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (Customer) changed decisions are those that are set aside (fully favourable) and varied (partially successful) for the customer. The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (Secretary) changed decisions are not favourable for the customer.

c) The following table provides a breakdown of Member of a Couple debts raised for 2013-14, by amount of debt.

Member of a Couple Debts Raised for 2013-14	
Debt Amount Raised	Number of Debts Raised
< \$2,000	20,056
\$2,000 and less than \$5,000	1,538
\$5,000 and less than \$10,000	492
\$10,000 and less than \$20,000	260
\$20,000 and less than \$50,000	195
\$50,000 and less than \$100,000	100
\$100,000 and less than \$150,000	26
\$150,000 and over	1
Total Number of Debts Raised	22,668

d) The department does not hold prosecution data. This is held by the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.

In the 2013-14 financial year, the department referred 16 Member of a Couple cases to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions for prosecution consideration.

e)

	2012-13	2013-14
Total member of a couple Compliance reviews	8,437	18,368
Total debts raised as a result of Compliance reviews.	418	634