

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

Department of Human Services

Topic: Cost of phone calls to customers

Question reference number: HS 42

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Will the Department introduce 1800 Freecall facilities on all its information and advice telephone lines?

Answer:

The Department continually reviews its operations to ensure customers are provided with a range of options to access services. The Department will not be expanding 1800 Freecall facilities to all customer phone lines.

The Department offers a range of options for customers who have concerns regarding the cost of contacting by mobile phone. The following options are available:

- self-managed services allow customers to report earnings, update income estimates, apply for advance payments, update personal details and view information about their payments without needing to contact the department;
- Express Plus apps are available for families, job seekers, students and seniors, which provide these customers with a more convenient way to conduct some of their Centrelink business;
- customers can utilise the call back (Place in Queue) service, which was rolled out across Centrelink's main business lines for calls from mobile phones from 19 December 2011 and rolled out for landlines from 25 October 2012; and
- customers can use the phones located in the department's service centres.