

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

Department of Human Services

Topic: Main Reasons for Centrelink Overpayments

Question reference number: HS 176

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Written

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Number of pages: 1

Question:

Provide a breakdown by the main reasons for Centrelink debts and percentage of customers involved: (for example, undeclared income, under-declared income, assets, member of a couple, compensation, etc).

Answer:

While the department does report on the numbers of customers with debts, this information cannot currently be broken down to the reason for the debt. Current information on the reasons for debts is only captured by the number of debts, rather than the number of customers. Therefore a breakdown of the percentage of customers cannot be provided at this time.

The following table shows the 13 main reasons for Centrelink debts raised for recovery action in 2013-14.

	Debt Reason Type	Number of debts raised for recovery action
1	Family Assistance Office (FAO) Reconciliation	551,526
2	Advance payment	131,775
3	Income - earnings wrongly declared/coded (self)	74,306
4	Income - earnings not declared/coded (self)	69,916
5	FAO Non-lodger debt	69,782
6	Not eligible for payment	62,446
7	Failed - form not lodged	60,038
8	Rent incorrectly declared/coded	44,671
9	Income earnings automatic	44,407
10	Loss of care	33,418
11	Discontinued studies	21,266
12	Income - earnings not declared/coded (partner)	19,766
13	Not entitled to a scholarship	18,511
*	Other	235,934
	Total	1,437,762

*Please note there are an additional 103 debt reason types which have been combined under the heading 'Other'.