

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 22 OCTOBER 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Rent Assistance Overpayments

Question reference number: HS 218

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 23 December 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) For the 2014-15, provide details of the number and value of Rent Assistance (RA) debts.
- b) Provide details of efforts to reduce RA overpayments.

Answer:

- a) In 2014-15, 222,021 debts, with a total value of \$100,941,984, were raised for Rent Assistance. This includes debts raised solely due to the incorrect declaration or recording of the customer's rental circumstances, as well as the Rent Assistance components of debts raised for other reasons, for example, where the customer is no longer entitled to income support.
- b) Efforts to reduce Rent Assistance overpayments include:
 - keeping staff reference material (Operational Blueprint) up to date with current policy and process; and
 - Rent Assistance Service Profiling and Compliance reviews. These reviews were conducted on a number of customers to check (and change customer's rates if needed) and ensure customers are receiving their correct entitlement rate.