

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 OCTOBER 2016 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Age Pension - hardship

Question reference number: 8 (HS 8)

Senator: Watt

Type of question: Hansard page 117

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 December 2016

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) Ms Campbell: We have let customers know that, if they are facing financial hardship, they should advise us, and we seek to accelerate those claims for customers who are experiencing financial hardship.

Senator WATT: How many requests of that nature, to accelerate, do you have on the books at the moment?

Mr Egan: We would have to take that on notice.

- b) Senator WATT: So you have taken on notice my request for data about the number of requests to accelerate payments?

Ms Campbell: Yes.

Senator WATT: And if we could get that data for each of the last five years at this point, or each of the last three years.

Ms Campbell: Our systems are not that responsive at the moment. For example, that data requires a manual collection. We will see what we can get this financial year; I think it is unlikely we will be able to get previous financial years.

Senator WATT: Maybe even if you could just do it for one previous financial year, if you can see how you are going?

Ms Campbell: We will have a look at what we have got, but we do rely quite a lot at the moment on ad hoc add-on systems to do this type of tracking.

Answer:

- a) As at 26 October 2016 there were 26 Age Pension hardship requests being assessed. Hardship claims are assessed as a priority pending all the required information being available for assessment.
- b) The department has only recently begun systematically collecting data on the number of hardship claims received. It is therefore not possible to provide data for the past period.