

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

Department of Human Services

Topic: Changes to Family Payments

Question reference number: 10 (HS 10)

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard pages 121-122

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

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: I have a very short question and then I suspect a couple of longer questions. Family tax benefit changes that were made in the omnibus bill—you know the ones I mean?

Ms Campbell: Yes.

Senator SIEWERT: Have letters gone out to people yet notifying them of the change?

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Senator SIEWERT: Is it planned for a letter to go out? With all due respect, I do not think a lot of parents receiving FTB will be checking out your website all the time.

Ms Campbell: Families are one of the more passionate users of social media.

Mr Thiveos: They are. There will be a letter. Can I go through the rest, if that is okay?

Senator SIEWERT: Can you take it on notice? I am very conscious of the time. If you have got a statement there that shows the approach that you are taking, it would be fantastic if you could table it.

Mr Thiveos: Okay.

Ms Campbell: We will be mailing it out.

Senator SIEWERT: Thank you.

Answer:

The Department of Human Services (the department) will be notifying customers of the change via letter as part of the New Financial Year Assessment mail out. The mail out will go to approximately 1.5 million families customers in May 2017 and will provide an overview of all programme changes, referring customers to the department's website for more detail.

In addition to the mail out, the department:

- has updated its website to include information about the measure; and
- is continuing to monitor the Family Update social media page to provide timely response to customer enquiries.

The following activities will also be conducted by the department:

- update departmental forms to advise customers of the change; and
- update telephony services to include a pre-recorded message advising customers of the change.