

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

Department of Human Services

Topic: Department's response to Ombudsman report *Department of Human Services: Investigation into Service Delivery Complaints about Centrelink April 2014*

Question reference number: 56 (HS 64)

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Why hasn't the Department implemented all the recommendations of the Ombudsman's review of Centrelink?

Answer:

Of the 33 recommendations in the Ombudsman report concerning Centrelink service delivery, the Department of Human Services (the department) has fully implemented, partially implemented or is in the process of implementing 32 of those recommendations.

The remaining recommendation, Recommendation 3(a), concerns the development of a performance standard for responding to customers' enquiries sent by post or email. The department continues to develop strategies to ensure that customer correspondence is managed efficiently and responses are made in a reasonable timeframe. The impact of these strategies, and the planning for longer term changes under the Welfare Payment Infrastructure Transformation, will inform further consideration of the feasibility of a performance standard in the future.

Some aspects of the recommendations were not fully implemented in the manner suggested by the Ombudsman, where the Ombudsman's recommended changes were not feasible or where the concern is better addressed in some other manner. The department is committed to improving its performance in all of the areas of concern identified in the Ombudsman's report.