

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-17 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities

Question No: SQ16-000327

Topic: Cashless Welfare Card

Hansard page: Written

Senator Rachel Siewert asked:

In relation to the Cashless Welfare Card, how many people are subject to the trial in Ceduna, and how many are subject to the trial in the East Kimberley?

- a) How many of the participants at each trial site are Aboriginal?
- b) Please provide a breakdown by main payment type, and the number of voluntary participants.
- c) To date, how many applications for exemption have been made in Ceduna, and how many have been made in the East Kimberley?
- d) How many and what percentage of these requests have been granted, rejected and appealed?
- e) To date, how many applications have been made for varying the limit on cash?
- f) How many and what percentage of requests for access to increased cash payments have been granted, rejected, and appealed?
- g) Please provide ratio and numbers and percentages granted against each ratio, for example 50:50, 60:40, 70:30.
- h) How many participants have required replacement of cards that have been lost, stolen or damaged?
- i) What has been the average time taken to replace cards?

Answer:

As at 7 October 2016, in Ceduna there were 754 people participating in the trial and in the East Kimberley there were 1,207 trial participants.

a) As at 7 October 2016, 570 Ceduna trial participants and 997 East Kimberley trial participants identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

b) Of the 1,961 trial participants:

- 887 (45%) received Newstart Allowance as their main payment;
- 400 (20%) received Disability Support Pension as their main payment;
- 292 (15%) received Parenting Payment Single as their main payment;
- 139 (7%) received Youth Allowance as their main payment;
- 110 (6%) received Parenting Payment Partnered as their main payment;
- 80 (4%) received Carer Payment as their main payment; and
- 53 (3%) received an alternative main payment from those listed above (for example alternative main payments include ABSTUDY or Austudy).

Two trial participants have volunteered for the trial through Centrelink and have their welfare payments split into restricted and unrestricted portions. There are other voluntary account holders who are not welfare recipients.

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c) and d) Exemptions can be requested by individuals or initiated by staff from the Department of Social Services, the Department of Human Services or Indue (including local partners employed by Indue). As at 3 November 2016, 17 trial participants in Ceduna and 15 trial participants in the East Kimberley have been granted exemptions.

e) As at 3 November 2016, there have been 153 applications to community panels to vary the restricted portion of their payment.

f) Of the 153 applications to the community panels:

- 122 have been approved;
- 21 have been rejected;
- 10 are pending; and
- 2 decisions have been appealed.

g) Of the 122 approved applications to the community panels:

- 7 trial participants had their restricted portion reduced to 50%;
- 71 trial participants had their restricted portion reduced to 60%; and
- 44 trial participants had their restricted portion reduced to 70%.

h) As at 3 November 2016, 929 participants were issued a replacement card on at least one occasion.

i) The operational contract between DSS and Indue requires that cards are printed and dispatched via post within two business days. While waiting for a new card, participants can access temporary cards from all local partners.