

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

Agency - Comcare

Department of Employment Question No. EM0839_15

Senator McKenzie asked on 2 June 2014 on proof Hansard page 84

Question

Comcare - Number of people receiving compensation and not working

Senator McKENZIE: We have the rolling figure of 12,000. Is there a figure within that 12,000 who are deemed never to be able to return to work? Mr Watson: No. There is no figure that we would deem as people who are never able to return to work. Amongst those claims, there would be—I do not have the exact figure on me—about 4,000 to 5,000 who would be actively receiving some compensation for not being currently at work. The balance of those claims are people on compensation for medical treatment or something that is not actually compensation. So 4,000 to 5,000 of those people are not currently at work fully and receiving some compensation for being less than fully at work. It is always open for any claimant to return to work or to be treated for a rehabilitation program. Senator McKENZIE: Because it is the best outcome, actually, for individuals to return to work, is it not, socially and economically? Mr Watson: It is the objective of Comcare to return people to work and to wellbeing, yes. Senator McKENZIE: Of those 4,000 to 5,000, how many have been in that state for more than 12 months? Mr Watson: I will get that information for you. I do not have it on hand.

Answer

There were approximately 5400 active incapacity claims as at 31 May 2014. An active incapacity claim is defined as a claim which has had incapacity activity in the previous three months. Of those 5400 active incapacity claims, approximately 3500 claims have been in that state for more than 12 months.