

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND**  
**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO**  
**2011-12 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number:** 5

**Question No:** 284

**Topic:** Disability Support Pension

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Fifield** asked:

With reference to the Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Pension Reform and Other 2009 Budget Measures) Act 2009:

How many complaints has FaHCSIA received from DSP recipients who believe that they have been made worse off due to the *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Pension Reform and Other 2009 Budget Measures) Act 2009*?

What was the nature of these complaints?

How many complaints were addressed?

How were they addressed?

What is the average length of time to resolve these complaints?

What was the cost of resolving these issues?

**Answer:**

Around 80 representations have been identified from pensioners, including Disability Support Pension recipients, about the operation of the 'transitional rules' set out in the *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Pension Reform and Other 2009 Budget Measures) Act 2009*.

Pensioners paid under the transitional rules have been advised that under the pension reform legislation, they are transferred to the new rules only when the new payment rate is equal to or higher than their transitional payment rate. Otherwise they continue to be paid under the transitional rules.

Once a pensioner is paid under the new rules, they no longer have access to the transitional rules, except where they are a member of a couple with one member in respite care, who subsequently returns home.

The enhanced indexation and wage benchmarking arrangements applying to pensions paid under the new system mean that over time, even where their private income has again returned to its previous level, people paid under the new rules will be better off than if they had continued to be paid under the transitional rules.

Information on the length of time that was taken to respond to these representations is not available.

The cost of responding to these representations has been accounted for as part of FaHCSIA's total resourcing, and has not been disaggregated from that resourcing.