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: 2   **Question No:** 426

Topic: Rent Assistance

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Nick Xenophon asked:

1. What percentage of the average rent paid by Rent Assistance recipients is covered by Rent Assistance? How has this changed over time?
2. What measures are in place, or being considered, to ensure that Indigenous Rent Assistance recipients are not cut off from Rent Assistance due to a failure to verify their rent details with Centrelink?
3. How many Rent Assistance recipients have benefited from the bulk verification of community housing rents?

Answer:

1. The following table shows the percentage of the average rent paid by Rent Assistance recipients that is covered by Rent Assistance for the past ten years, at June each year from 2001 to 2010.

June 2001	June 2002	June 2003	June 2004	June 2005	June 2006	June 2007	June 2008	June 2009	June 2010
28%	28%	27%	28%	28%	27%	27%	26%	25%	25%

2. Until March 2010 most Rent Assistance recipients needed to provide Rent Certificates to Centrelink confirming the amount of rent paid by an individual every six months. Since then Centrelink has used risk profiling to select recipients who are required to verify their accommodation details. As a result the number of reviews being undertaken has fallen from 600,000 to approximately 300,000 annually. This has reduced unnecessary paper work for customers, including some Indigenous renters. Indigenous renters will also benefit from Bulk Verification of Rent Service referred to below.

3. As at 22 June 2011, up to 3,300 Rent Assistance customers have benefited from the Bulk Verification of Rent Service. We expect this number to rise from September 2011 as additional organisations undertake their cyclical rent reviews following the end of financial year.