

**SENATE EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION  
LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

**2007-2008 BUDGET SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING  
28 and 29 MAY 2007  
EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Outcome 3: Increased workforce participation**

**Output Group 3.1: Working age policy**

**Output 3.1.1: Working age policy and legislation**

**Question Number: W257-08**

**Question:**

Senator Wong asked in writing:

How does DEWR identify whether a person is currently, or at risk of, homelessness, when they apply for income support? For example, does DEWR look at factors that indicate the person is at risk of homelessness?

**Answer:**

DEWR does not directly administer income support payments. DEWR oversees Centrelink's administration of income support payments. Centrelink administers income support payments in accordance with legislation and DEWR policy.

When they lodge a new claim, all job seekers are assessed by the Job Seeker Capacity Instrument (JSCI) to determine whether or not they have barriers to employment and to stream them to appropriate employment and other services to help them to overcome those barriers. One of the factors taken into account by the JSCI is stability of residence. This factor seeks to identify job seekers who are homeless or are living in unstable or insecure accommodation.

When the JSCI is completed, a referral for a Job Capacity Assessment is made if the JSCI flags that additional assessment is required. The Job Capacity Assessment provides additional information regarding the impacts of homelessness on the job seeker's capacity to comply to work or look for work.

Centrelink can also, at any time, record a Vulnerability Indicator on a job seekers record indicating homelessness based on evidence from a Job Capacity Assessment or Centrelink Specialist Assessment.

Centrelink staff may also identify potential homelessness based on information on the person's record including frequent changes of address, issues related with receiving

letters or lodgement of duplicate Application for Payment, rent certificates provided for medium or long term accommodation in boarding houses, caravan parks or hotels that are not covered by a lease agreement and through requests for urgent payments or crisis payment.

Centrelink's on line guidelines (E-Reference) provide a great deal of information on homelessness and options to assist homeless people, including a section on "Identifying and offering a package of services for customers who are considered homeless".

**Estimated cost:** Using the FOI calculator, to prepare this answer it has taken approximately half an hour at an estimated cost of \$10.