

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Department of Human Services

Additional Estimates February 2005

Question: HS41

Outcome 1, Output Effective delivery of Australian Government services to eligible customers

Topic: Review of payment recipients' property holdings

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

Senator Evans asked on 15 February 2005:

- (1) Can Centrelink provide details of any comprehensive reviews of payment recipients' real estate holdings that have been conducted over the last two financial years?
- (2) How many payments have been reduced or cancelled as a result of these reviews? Please provide this information by payment type and by state.
- (3) Are steps being taken to ensure the real estate holdings of payment recipients are more regularly reviewed?
- (4) How many people affected by these reviews have appealed the decision, and how many have been paid under the Assets Hardship provisions?
- (5) Could we have a breakdown by capital cities of the number and type of payments cancelled and reduced, and the amount expected to be saved each financial year as a result?
- (6) Is the AVO now being used to assess the value of property holdings?
- (7) Is the AVO applying the same valuation methodology across Australia?
- (8) Are pensioners given a transition period following the new assessment of the value of their properties, or does their pension cease immediately?

Answer:

(1) (2) and (5)

The following tables outline details of real estate reviews conducted over the last two financial years. Centrelink is unable to break down the data by State and capital city.

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Centrelink Review Activity for Real Estate – Financial Year 2002-2003

Program	Number of Reviews Completed	Number of Cancellations	Reductions in Payment	Fortnightly Savings \$
Age Pension [1]	14,390	81	3,090	260,553
Austudy Payment	86	18	4	5,641
Carer Payment	136	12	34	6,228
Carer Allowance	8	0	0	0
Disability Support Pension [2]	622	25	192	19,823
Family Tax Benefit	70	1	8	2309
Mobility Allowance	1	0	0	0
Newstart Allowance [3]	731	98	56	34,563
Parenting Payment Partnered	343	42	43	16,051
Parenting Payment Single	380	25	55	13,892
Partner Allowance	203	21	32	7,490
Sickness Allowance	27	3	2	1,192
Special Benefit	2	0	1	0
Widow Allowance	51	10	9	4,386
Youth Allowance	3	0	0	0
TOTAL	17,053	336	3,526	372,128

NOTE:

(1) Age Pension includes Wife Pension (Age) and Widow B Pension.

(2) Disability Support Pension includes Wife Pension (DSP).

(3) Newstart Allowance includes Mature Age Allowance.

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Centrelink Review Activity for Real Estate – Financial Year 2003-2004

Program	Number of Reviews Completed	Number of Cancellations	Reductions in Payment	Fortnightly Savings \$
Age Pension [1]	19,169	103	3,859	342,130
Austudy Payment	24	7	2	2,116
Carer Payment	31	3	8	1,736
Carer Allowance	6	0	0	0
Disability Support Pension [2]	142	6	39	5,891
Family Tax Benefit	12	0	1	336
Newstart Allowance [3]	192	20	17	8,715
Parenting Payment Partnered	97	23	13	9,641
Parenting Payment Single	81	9	12	4,554
Partner Allowance	55	8	15	3,958
Sickness Allowance	4	0	0	0
Widow Allowance	12	2	2	703
Youth Allowance	2	0	1	199
	19,827	181	3,969	379,979

NOTE:

(1) Age Pension includes Wife Pension (Age) and Widow B Pension.

(2) Disability Support Pension includes Wife Pension (DSP).

(3) Newstart Allowance includes Mature Age Allowance.

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- (3) Yes.
- (4) Centrelink does not have separate data regarding appeals of the decision following a review of real estate, or how many customers have been paid under Asset Hardship provisions as a result of these reviews.
- (5) Refer to the relevant tables above.
- (6) Yes.
- (7) Yes.
- (8) The payment ceases from the date the new valuation is applied.