

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Human Services Portfolio**

**Department of Human Services**

Additional Estimates February 2005

**Question: HS43**

**Outcome 1, Output 1.1 - Effective delivery of Australian Government Services to eligible customers**

**Topic: Newstart and youth allowance matters**

**Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written**

Senator Evans asked on 15 February 2005:

- (1) Please provide figures on overall numbers of NSA and YA incapacitated paid in 2003-04, and 2004-05 to March 2005, plus an additional breakdown by age and gender for the periods listed.
- (2) Can we have the figures of recipients that were newly granted NSA and YA incapacitated in each of the last three financial years?
- (3) Could we have data on type of 'flexible' or 'partial' Preparing for Work Agreements (PFWAs) granted to clients on who have exited from NSA and YA incapacitated payments for each of the last two financial years, based upon the work capacity as assessed using the bands available to Centrelink?
- (4) Could we have data for people over the last two financial years about the length of time a person was on NSA and YA incapacitated before their were exited from the payment?
- (5) Can we have details of the numbers of medical certificates that were not accepted by Centrelink from customers seeking an activity test exemption, of currently on an activity test exemption?
- (6) Could we have information on the number of recipients in the last financial year who move from a full activity test exemption to the normal activity test requirements for NSA or YA?
- (7) Could we be provided with an outline of the range of support services available to those on NSA and YA incapacitated and after they are placed on full activity test for NSA and YA?
- (8) Could we have a breakdown of the types of incapacity or health problems experienced by recipients on NSA and YA incapacitated (eg mental health conditions) for the last two financial years?
- (9) Of those who have been exited from NSA and YA incapacitated over each of the last two financial years, could we be provided with data on length of time on NSA and YA incapacitated?
- (10) Could we have data on the number of recipients breached within the 12 month period they go off incapacitated payments, over the last two years?
- (11) What research has the Centrelink undertaken into incapacitated clients or the 'Better Assessment' policies since they were introduced in September 2002? Is there any research that you are planning to do? If there is any research, could the findings be provided?
- (12) What are the actual employment outcomes of the 'Better Assessment and Early Intervention' changes introduced in 2002, for each of the last two financial years and the use of work capacity assessors?
- (13) What issues arise for Centrelink, Job Network providers and recipients in circumstances where they have had a medical certificate for an exemption rejected by Centrelink, and they then proceed to hand this same certificate to the Job Network provider?

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Answers:

(1) The Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance population breakdown, including an age and gender breakdown as at 18 June 2004 and 18 February 2005 is provided below. Note: There is no Newstart or Youth Allowance incapacitated payment. Newstart or Youth allowee job seekers requesting an exemption from the activity test lodge medical certificates and may be granted an exemption because of an incapacity.

<b>Newstart incapacitated Population 18/6/04</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Newstart incapacitated population 18/2/05</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
21-24 Years	2,758	2,375	21-24 Years	2,602	2,372
25-34 Years	8,103	3,989	25-34 Years	7,731	3,859
35-44 Years	8,427	4,233	35-44 Years	8,145	4,110
45-54 Years	7,021	5,978	45-54 Years	6,757	6,091
55-64 Years	5,362	2,778	55-64 Years	5,687	3,215
<b>Youth Allowance incapacitated population 18/6/04</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Youth Allowance incapacitated population 18/2/05</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
15-20 Years	1,799	2,310	15-20 Years	1,617	2,296
21-24 Years	26	25	21-24 Years	20	21

(2) Centrelink does not source or report data on the number of recipients that were newly granted Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance.

(3) Centrelink does negotiate flexible Preparing for Work Agreements with job seekers. The activities negotiated for inclusion in a Preparing for Work Agreement take into consideration the job seeker's individual circumstances including their education, skills, age and physical condition, including the impact of any disability or medical condition.

Centrelink does not collect specific information which distinguishes when a flexible (modified) Preparing for Work Agreement is negotiated. All Preparing for Work Agreements can be tailored to meet individual needs.

(4) Centrelink does not source or report data relating to movement from exemptions to normal activity test requirements.

(5) The data below shows total Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance customers medical certificate lodgements for 2004 including a breakdown of exemptions granted and those not granted.

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<b>TOTAL Number of medical certificates lodged 2004 (NSA/YA Other)</b>		
<b>Number of medical certificates lodged not leading to an activity test exemption</b>	<b>Number of medical certificates lodged leading to an exemption from the activity test</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
84571	398928	483499

(6) Centrelink does not source or report data relating to movement from exemptions to normal activity test requirements.

(7) Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowances (incapacitated) job seekers may be assessed by professional assessors to determine their capacity to work. The professional assessors include work capacity and medical assessors and psychologists. They provide an assessment report to Centrelink which helps determine the customer's activity test requirements, informs Centrelink of the barriers the customer faces and makes recommendations for assistance to overcome these barriers.

Centrelink provides the options listed in the assessment report to the customer. These range from community options eg. referral to community health centres and State Government programs to Commonwealth funded program participation eg. Personal Support Program, disability specific employment assistance, Job Network assistance or other Commonwealth programs.

If the job seeker is exempted from the activity test then participation in any of the programs is voluntary. Those job seekers who do not receive an exemption from the activity test are required to participate in appropriate options meeting the requirements of the activity test.

(8) Centrelink has supplied the medical conditions of Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance (job seekers), by the first reported medical condition on their medical certificate.

Customer numbers are point-in-time figures as at 25 February 2005.

<b>Latest Main Medical Condition</b>	
AMPUTATION - ABOVE ELBOW	3
AMPUTATION - ABOVE KNEE	7
AMPUTATION - BELOW ELBOW	13
AMPUTATION - BELOW KNEE	31
ARNOLD-CHIARI SYNDROME	1

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<b>Latest Main Medical Condition</b>	
ATTENTION DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER	53
ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE	892
CANCER - LEUKAEMIA (ACUTE)	32
ALZHEIMERS DISEASE	3
AUTOSOMAL RECESSIVE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY	2
ANXIETY	3266
ASPERGERS DISEASE	6
ASTHMA	205
AUTISM	1
ANOREXIA NERVOSA	55
BURSITIS CAPSULITIS & TENDONITIS	120
URINARY TRACT DISORDERS INCL BLADDER	95
BLIND - BOTH EYES	1
BLIND - ONE EYE	28
CANCER/TUMOUR - BONE	12
CANCER/TUMOUR - BOWEL	101
BI POLAR AFFECTIVE (MANIC DEPRESSION)	622
CANCER/TUMOUR - BRAIN	86
BRONCHITIS	54
CANCER/TUMOUR - BREAST	242
BULIMIA	14
BURNS AND THEIR EFFECTS	58
BEHAVIOUR DISORDER	12
CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE	259
CATARACTS	76

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<b>Latest Main Medical Condition</b>	
CEREBRAL PALSY	2
CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME	524
CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE	73
HEARING LOSS - COMPLETE	1
CHRONIC PAIN	201
CONGENITAL LIMB DEFORMITY	2
CANCER - LEUKAEMIA (CHRONIC)	24
CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE AIRWAYS DISEASE	73
COELIAC DISEASE	14
CHRONIC PULMONARY HEART DISEASE	91
CROHNS DISEASE	84
CURVATURE OF THE SPINE	3
CARPEL TUNNEL SYNDROME	478
CYSTIC FIBROSIS	1
DEAFNESS-BLINDNESS	8
DEPRESSION	11016
DRUG DEPENDENCE	2253
DUCHENNE (MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY)	1
DIVERTICULAR DISEASE	30
EPILEPSY - ABSENCE SEIZURE - PETIT MAL	37
ENCOPRESIS	1
EPILEPSY - COMPLEX SEIZURE	79
ECZEMA	30
EPILEPSY - GRAND MAL (TONIC-CLONIC)	92
EMOTION DISTURB; CHILD/ADOLESCENT	1

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<b>Latest Main Medical Condition</b>	
EMPHYSEMA	41
ENDOMETRIOSISES	67
EPILEPSY - MYOCLONIC SEIZURE	13
EPILEPSY - SIMPLE SEIZURE	166
FIBROMYALGIA	145
INFLUENZA	62
FRACTURES AND CRUSH INJURIES	2397
GALLBLADDER DISORDERS	74
GUILLAIN BARRE SYNDROME	13
GLAUCOMA	12
GLANDULAR FEVER	55
GOUT	94
HAEMOPHILIA	6
CANCER - HODGKINS/NON HODGKINS DISEASE	69
HYPERTHYROIDISM	94
HYPOTHYROIDISM	49
HEPATITIS A	14
HEPATITIS B	43
HEPATITIS C	331
HEPATITIS D - H	1
HEMIPLEGIA (PARALYSIS)	6
HYPERTENSION	362
HERNIA	479
HIV CATEGORY 3	51
HIV/AIDS CATEGORY 4	7

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IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME	92
DIABETES - INSULIN DEPENDENT	246
ISCHAEMIC HEART DISEASE	340
IMMUNODEFICIENCY	46
INFECTIONS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM	30
INTERVERTEBRAL DISC DISORDER	290
KIDNEY DISORDERS	110
LACTOSE INTOLERANCE	1
IQ IS LESS THAN 55	3
LOWER LIMB DISORDER	2036
CANCER/TUMOUR - LUNG	44
LUPUS	39
LEARNING DISABILITY	23
CANCER/TUMOUR - LARYNX	17
LOW VISION - BOTH EYES	7
LIVER DISORDER IE CIRRHOSIS BUT NOT HEP	127
LOW VISION - ONE EYE	12
CANCER/TUMOUR - LIVER	11
CONGENITAL ABNORMALITIES - MULTIPLE	3
MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SYNDROME	4
MIGRAINE	188
MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE	1
MENIERES DISEASE	37
MORBID OBESITY	42
MONOPLÉGIA (PARALYSIS)	1

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MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS	26
MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION (HEART ATTACK)	226
NECK DISORDER	589
DIABETES - NON INSULIN DEPENDENT	306
ARTHRITIS - OTHER	509
CONGENITAL ABNORMALITY - OTHER	12
OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER	79
CIRCULATORY SYSTEM - OTHER EG VASCULITIS	689
CANCER/TUMOUR - OTHER	276
OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER	2
ENDOCRINE SYSTEM DYSFUNCTION - OTHER	50
GYNAECOLOGICAL DISORDER - OTHER	299
MUSCULO-SKELETAL DISORDER - OTHER	4971
MYOPATHY -OTHER	8
NERVE ROOT COMPRESSION - OTHER	27
NERVOUS SYSTEM - OTHER	171
OESOPHAGEAL DISORDER	56
PSYCHOL/PSYCHIATRIC DISORDER - OTHER	739
REPRODUCTIVE PROBLEM - OTHER	71
RESPIRATORY DISORDER - OTHER	321
SKIN DISORDER - OTHER	207
OSTEOMYELITIS	23
OSTEOPOROSIS	39
CANCER/TUMOUR - OESOPHAGUS	15
OSTEOARTHRITIS	1066



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CANCER/TUMOUR - OVARIAN	28
PANCREATIC DISORDER	63
PARKINSONS DISEASE	3
CANCER/TUMOUR - PANCREAS	7
PHOBIAS	70
HEARING LOSS - PARTIAL	67
PARANOID	27
POLIOMYELITIS	4
COMPLICATIONS OF PREGNANCY	1767
PARAPLEGIA (PARALYSIS)	7
PSYCHOSOCIAL DEPRIVATION	1
PSORIASIS	48
CANCER/TUMOUR - PROSTATE	84
PSYCHOTIC	433
POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER	476
PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASE	40
PERSONALITY DISORDER	46
QUADRIPLEGIA (PARALYSIS)	1
RECTAL DISORDER	122
ROTATOR CUFF INJURY	242
RETT SYNDROME	1
RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS	132
CANCER/TUMOUR - RENAL	23
RENAL TRACT DISORDERS	85
REGIONAL PAIN SYNDROME	61

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SCHIZOPHRENIA	1076
CANCER/TUMOUR - SKIN	38
SPINAL MUSCULAR ATROPHY	20
SEVERE MULTIPLE DISABILITY - SEIZURES	2
SCIATICA - NERVE ROOT COMPRESSION	349
SPINA BIFIDA	6
SPONDYLOSIS	316
SPEECH DISORDER - OTHER	18
SPINAL DISORDER - OTHER	2870
SPRAINS & STRAINS	201
CANCER/TUMOUR - SARCOMA	6
CANCER/TUMOUR - STOMACH	10
STOMACH DISORDER (E.G. ULCER)	383
SPEECH DISORDER - STUTTERING	1
SHOULDER AND UPPER ARM DISORDER	1656
SYNOVITIS TENOSYNOVITIS & OOS	51
BRAIN INJURY - TRAUMATIC	247
TUBERCULOSIS	32
CANCER/TUMOUR - THYROID	31
TINNITUS	28
THALASSAEMIA	3
TOURETTES SYNDROME	5
TRANSPLANT - ORGAN FAILURE	1
CANCER/TUMOUR - TESTICULAR	29
BRAIN INJURY - TOXIC (EG ALCOHOL)	9

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Latest Main Medical Condition	
EYE ANOMALY - UNSPECIFIED	142
URINARY INCONTINENCE	19
ULCERATIVE COLITIS	55
VISUAL LOSS - UNSPECIFIED	44
VERTIGO	114

(9) Centrelink does not source or report data relating to movement from exemptions to normal activity test requirements.

(10) The data below shows total Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance customers granted by financial year since 2002-03 with at least one non-revoked breach after an incapacity period.

**Number of breaches (non-revoked) following a period of incapacity**

Financial year of grant	Within 1 year of incapacity	After 1 year of incapacity	Total
2002-03	3398	805	<b>4203</b>
2003-04	516	0	<b>516</b>

(11) Centrelink has not conducted any specific research of the Newstart and Youth allowance (incapacitated) population.

(12) Centrelink's role with Newstart and Youth Allowees under the "Better Assessment and Early Intervention" measure introduced in September 2002 is to refer customers for an assessment (medical, work capacity or psychologist) and to use the information from the assessment report as well as other customer information to determine activity test requirements and offer appropriate assistance. Centrelink is not the funding agency for any assistance provided and does not measure outcomes of programs, whether Commonwealth or State funded, to which customers are referred. Question 12 is best referred to the relevant funding agency.

(13) Centrelink is the delegate for determination of activity test exemption requests. If a medical certificate has been provided to Centrelink for the purpose of requesting an exemption from the activity test and Centrelink determines that an activity test exemption is not appropriate, the job seeker must meet activity test requirements. This includes participating with the Job Network member to which they have been referred.