

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Department of Human Services

Additional Estimates February 2005

Question: HS45

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

Topic: Decisions to grant 'unreasonable to live at home' youth allowance payments

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

Senator Evans asked on 15 February 2005:

- (1) What is the purpose of the 'unreasonable to live at home' youth allowance rate.
- (2) Can the officials provide data on the number of decisions made by Centrelink to grant 'unreasonable to live at home' youth allowance rate over the last two financial years?
- (3) Could we get a breakdown of the time taken to process these claims?
- (4) Can you inform us of any timeliness standards and other measures that are used within Centrelink to assess its performance in the processing of 'unreasonable to live at home' claims?
- (5) Can an estimate be made of the number of social work days devoted to investigating and process such claims, and the percentage of social work time devoted to this activity, as a percentage to their overall workload?

Answer:

- (1) The main purpose of Youth Allowance 'unreasonable to live at home' rate is to ensure that young people, forced to leave home because of extreme family breakdown, are provided with income support and access to services and programs that will assist them.
- (2) There have been 90,204 claims in the last two financial years.

	Granted	Rejected	Withdrawn	Total claims
2002-03	27,372 (61.7%)	14,290 (32.2%)	2,689 (6.1%)	44,351
2003-04	27,725 (60.5%)	15,081 (32.9%)	3,047 (6.6%)	45,853

- (3) Centrelink does not record the time taken to complete the assessment process.
- (4) There is no specific timeliness standard for 'unreasonable to live at home' claims in recognition of the complexity of the cases being assessed. While every effort is made to complete the assessment process within 21 days, or sooner there are situations where this is not possible.

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(5) Unreasonable to Live at home assessments constitute a major part of Centrelink Social Workers' work activity.

In 2002-03 and 2003-04 there were a total of 509,318 referrals to Social Workers. Of these, 109,823 (21.6%) were for Unreasonable to Live at Home assessments.

While these assessments are over 20% of referral numbers, they make up a much larger proportion of Social Work work load and are more time consuming than other work which social workers undertake in which they exercise their decision making responsibilities under Social Security legislation.