

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Additional Estimates 2006-2007, 13th and 16th February, 2007

Question: HS16

Agency: Centrelink

Outcome 1, Output 1.1

Topic: Centrelink Media Messages – Priorities

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[In relation to Centrelink media messages – priorities]

Mr Jongen—The whole issue of deterring fraud is one of the key objectives of our media management strategy. So, firstly, in answer to your specific question, there has not been a reminder, as I recall, in recent editions of *News for Seniors*. However, I am aware that there has been some dialogue about the deterrent issue. We are always competing for space and priorities. In addition to that, we have worked with programs such as *A Current Affair* and *Today Tonight*, where this approach has been highlighted as a deterrent. It has been at their initiative, but we see it as important to cooperate. In addition to that, as part of our ongoing engagement with talkback radio, this whole area is one of the key areas of messaging, along with other key issues such as appeal rights. We have a set of priorities that we work to in terms of what we see as important messages.

Senator MOORE—Could we get a list of those priorities, Mr Jongen?

Mr Jongen—I will take that on notice.

ANSWER:

Centrelink's core priorities for communication using free media are:

Customer feedback

To inform customers of the avenues available if they are unhappy with Centrelink service or a Centrelink decision, for example, "Centrelink has an extensive and well established system for customers to ask for a review and all customers are entitled to a fair, thorough and accessible appeals system."

Support the System that Supports You

To inform customers about their responsibility to tell Centrelink when things change, for example, "The easiest way to avoid debt is to report any changes in your circumstances straight away by calling 13 62 80, or by visiting your nearest Centrelink office."

Access

To inform customers of the different ways of doing business with Centrelink, for example, "Self Service is about making it easier for customers to access Centrelink when and where it suits them."

Fraud

To demonstrate that Centrelink takes its job as a custodian of taxpayer money seriously and to deter people from intentionally setting out to defraud the Commonwealth, for example, "The vast majority of Centrelink customers are honest and entitled to their payments, but for those

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who deliberately attempt to defraud their fellow Australians, you will be caught. And when you are you will be pursued to the full extent of the law."

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 2 hours and 46 minutes at an estimated cost of \$160.