

**Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Human Services Portfolio**

Additional Estimates 2006-2007, 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2007

**Question: HS20**

**Agency: Centrelink**

**Outcome 1, Output 1.1**

**Topic: Security guards and assault by customers.**

**Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Hansard Page F&PA 34**

**SENATOR MOORE** asked on 16/02/2007:

**Senator MOORE**—I know you keep figures about identified assaults if a staff member comes forward and says, ‘This happened.’ I know you have to make decisions about whether or not that is going to happen. Over the last 12 months, how many were in places where there were security guards and how many were in places where there were not security guards?

**Mr Whalan**—I do not have that information.

**Senator MOORE**—Can you take that on notice?

**Mr Whalan**—Yes, we will take that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

In 2006, 32 Centrelink sites had security guards for all or part of the year. Across these sites there were 52 reported assaults made against Centrelink employees. For the remaining 284 Centrelink sites with no security guards there were 258 reported assaults.

Centrelink has well-established policies and procedures for the prevention and management of customer aggression incidents. All Centrelink customer service offices have security procedures and duress alarms. The duress alarms are connected to a security monitoring service and the police are contacted immediately. Centrelink Managers also have well-established relationships with local police.

Centrelink is continually working to improve its customer service strategies, security policies and training for employees, to reduce the risk to employees and customers. The closed circuit television policy has been reviewed and improved security outcomes will be achieved by expanding closed circuit television coverage.

The number of incidents, which lead to physical injury, remains very low at approximately one per cent of customer aggression reports.

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes at an estimated cost of \$107.