

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: HS31

Agency: Centrelink

Outcome 1, Output 1.1

Topic: Centrelink Random Sample Surveys

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SENATOR WONG asked on 16/02/07:

Senator WONG—Have you done any RSSs in the current financial year?

Dr Browne—Yes, we have. As Mr Whalan explained, we do them constantly, but for some departments it is three times a year and for some it is two; there are different cycles.

Senator WONG—What do the results thus far indicate in relation to—what was your phrase, errors with a dollar impact?

Dr Browne—I do not have figures beyond the end of the last financial year, so I cannot give you figures for 1 July onwards.

Senator WONG—Meaning you personally do not have them, Centrelink does not have them or what?

Dr Browne—I can give you a payment correctness figure for the first survey period for 2006-07 broken down by department. I do not have an overall figure—and again these are unconfirmed figures, so the policy departments have not signed off on these figures.

Senator WONG—Okay.

Dr Browne—For the first survey period for 2006-07 for working age payments—that is, DEWR payments—the correctness rate is 95.9 per cent. So the error rate would be the difference between that percentage and 100 per cent. For student payments—that is, for DEST—for the same period, it is 97.6 per cent. I do not have the FaCSIA figure here at the moment.

Senator WONG—If you could take that on notice. You said these figures relate to the financial year; to what date are they accurate?

Dr Browne—With the working age payments, the DEWR figures, they are as at 13 December. They are both as at 13 December 2006.

ANSWER:

Centrelink undertakes Random Sample Survey reviews on a rolling basis and the figures below are based on work undertaken this financial year. For the first survey period of 2006-07 the Centrelink payment correctness figure for FaCSIA is 94.32 per cent.

Taking into account the previously reported results for DEWR and DEST, the overall Centrelink payment correctness figure is 95.77 per cent. These figures are based on preliminary data that has not been signed off by the respective policy departments.

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To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 2 hours and 56 minutes at an estimated cost of \$168.