

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 24 FEBRUARY 2009

Human Services Portfolio

Department/Agency: Centrelink

Outcome/Output Group: Outcome 1/Output Group 1.1

Topic: Centrelink Error

Senator: Scullion

Question reference number: HS20a

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April 2009

Question:

HS20a: How many cases of errors made by Centrelink were reported or detected in 2007-08? ie incorrect payment made due to Centrelink calculation or assessment error.

Answer:

HS20a: The total number of individual errors detected resulting in an incorrect payment is not collected. There are multiple processes to detect and correct errors and not all are attributed to either customer or Centrelink error.

Centrelink uses Random Sample Survey Results to assess and report on the overall level of payment correctness. The Random Sample Surveys are conducted on behalf of Policy Departments for most significant payments. Sample sizes and the methodology for undertaking the reviews are set by the Policy Departments. The level of correctness is determined by representing the number of customers with an error as a percentage of those surveyed. The overall level of correctness reported in the 2007-08 Annual Report was 95.32 per cent. This means 4.68 per cent of customers had a payment affected by Centrelink error.

The 4.68 per cent of customers who had a payment affected by Centrelink error may have had a downward variation to their payment, a cancellation and/or a debt. A customer may have their debt waived. This means that only a portion of the 4.68 per cent of customers will have a reduction in their payment.

Number of pages: 1