

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and agencies

Budget Estimates 2005-2006, 26 May 2005

Question: HS87

Outcome 1, Output Group 1.1

Topic: Centrelink – Breaching/Compliance statistics

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR EVANS asked on 26 May 2005:

(1) For Newstart, Special Benefit, Youth Allowance and Parenting Payment customers, for each month since September 2003, please indicate: (Please break up this information by payment type, state/territory, federal electorate, age of customer, gender of customer and aboriginality of customer.)

(a) The total number of customers who have been subject to a 16% payment reduction for 13 weeks for an administrative breach.

(b) The total number of customers who have been subject to an 18% payment reduction for 26 weeks for a first activity test breach.

(c) The total number of customers who have been subject to a 24% payment reduction for 26 weeks for a second activity test breach.

(d) The total number of customers who have been subject to an eight week payment suspension a third or subsequent activity test breach.

(2) For Newstart, Special Benefit, Youth Allowance and Parenting Payment customers, for each month since September 2003, please indicate: (Please break up this information by payment type, state/territory, federal electorate, age of customer, gender of customer and aboriginality of customer.)

(a) The total number of customers who appeal a breach penalty to an Authorised Review Officer.

(b) The number of breach decisions that were rejected/upheld by AROs.

(c) The total number of customers who appeal a breach penalty to the SSAT.

(d) The number of breach decisions that were rejected/upheld by the SSAT.

(e) The total number of customers who appeal a breach penalty to the AAT.

(f) The number of breach decisions that were rejected/upheld by the AAT.

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(3) For each month since September 2003, please indicate the number of participation reports from Job Network members to Centrelink and the number of breaches imposed by Centrelink as a result of these reports.

(4) For each month since September 2003, please indicate the number of breaches imposed on customers enrolled in the Personal Support Program, the level of the breaches imposed and the reasons for these breaches.

(5) Has the Social Policy Research Centre been commissioned to undertake research into the impact of breaches? Has this research now been completed? What is the status of this research? Will it be publicly released? If not, why not?

Answer:

(1) Please refer to [Quarterly Breach Data](#) which can be found on the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations website.

(<http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Category/ResearchStats/PublicBreachData.htm>)

(2) The answers to question (2) for the years 2004 and 2005 can be found in attachments 2004.xls and 2005.xls. Data for 2003 has not been included as there is no data available for this period.

Note 1: Due to privacy provisions Centrelink is not able to provide information in relation to breaching where there are less than 20 cases in the category. All fields in the attached documents with values of less than 20 have been masked.

Note 2: Category totals that are less than 20 are not provided, for ease of reading.

Note 3: Centrelink is unable to provide a break down of breach data at the State and Territory level or by federal electorate. At the State / Territory level most of the fields would be masked as the number of cases in each category would be less than 20. Data is not available by federal electorate.

(3) Please refer to the [Centrelink Quarterly Public Breach Data](#) which can be found on the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations website.

(<http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Category/ResearchStats/PublicBreachData.htm>)

(4) There were a total of 247 breaches imposed against customers enrolled in the Personal Support Program from September 2003 to May 2005. Cells that have a value of less than 20 have been changed to display '<20'. This rule has been employed for privacy reasons.

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Breach Type	Penalty	Breaches
Admin Breaches	16%	38
	100%	<20
Activity Test Breaches	18% (1 st)	162
	24% (2 nd)	41
	100% (3 rd)	<20

The main breach reason for customers enrolled in the Personal Support Program, was for 'failing to declare earnings from employment' which accounted for 127 first activity test breaches (18% penalty) and 28 second activity test breaches (24% penalty).

(5) Centrelink is unable to provide information in relation to research undertaken by the Social Policy Research Centre in relation to the impact of breaching. This information should be sourced directly from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.