

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and agencies

Budget Estimates 26 May 2005

Question: HS96

Outcome 1, Output Group 1.1

Topic: Centrelink - Provision of customer information to marketing firms

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR EVANS asked on 26 May 2005:

- (1) Please list all work that DBM has undertaken on behalf of/for Centrelink?
- (2) Has DBM ever obtained any access to any Centrelink customer records?
- (3) What level of access to customer records has DBM had? What information from customer records has DBM had access to?
- (4) Is the permission of Centrelink customers sought before DBM is given access to any of their records? If not, why not?
- (5) Is the permission of Centrelink customers sought before they are contacted by DBM? If not, why not?
- (6) Are Centrelink customers given the opportunity to 'opt-out' of being contacted by DBM before they are actually contacted? If not, why not?
- (7) Has Centrelink received any complaints about DBM's activities? If so, please indicate how many complaints Centrelink has received, and what it did in response to these complaints?
- (8) For how long (how many years) has DBM been engaged by Centrelink?
- (9) Are DBM still engaged by Centrelink?
- (10) If so, please provide details of the current contract with DBM (term, work required, cost, money paid to DBM to date).
- (11) What about the other 8 market research companies contracted by Centrelink in 2003-04 (see page 272)
- (12) Has any of this work involved access to Centrelink customer records? Please provide details of where customer records are accessed, and what information is used by the market research companies.

Answer

- (1) Please refer to page 271 of the 2004-2005 of the Centrelink Annual Report.
- (2) No.
- (3) None. Limited customer information is provided to develop, monitor and analyse the research and to invite customers to participate.
- (4) Not applicable. DBM Consultants Pty Ltd is not given access to customer records.

- (5) Not on a project by project basis. Information about Centrelink research activities and how to opt-out is provided to customers when they claim a payment.
- (6) Yes. Customers can request to be excluded from research contact lists at any time.
- (7) Any complaints received have been handled in the appropriate manner.
- (8) Four years.
- (9) Please refer to page 271 of the 2004-2005 Centrelink Annual Report.
- (10) Please refer to page 271 of the 2004-2005 Centrelink Annual Report.
- (11) Please refer to page 271 of the 2004-2005 Centrelink Annual Report.
- (12) These market research companies were not given access to customer records.