

Estimates 2005-06 — Budget Estimates, May 2005

Questions on Notice Index—Department of Human Services and agencies

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS1	DHS	Wong	F&PA 5-6 26/5/05	<p>Senator WONG—When was that decision made? Ms Scott—I would have to take that question on notice. I do not have— ... Senator WONG—Could you also indicate to me whether, prior to that decision being made, there was contact with the minister's office regarding this issue? Ms Scott—I will also investigate that for you. ... Senator WONG—Was it the case that the department was asked by Minister Hockey to link to his personal web site as opposed to his parliamentary web site? Ms Scott—I am happy to take your questions and to come back—if I can, this morning—with an answer. I simply do not have that material available to me. Senator WONG—Perhaps you can. I am interested in when the decision was made, what contact there was with the minister's office in relation to this issue prior to the decision being made and the basis on which the decision was made to link to a personal, party political web site as opposed to the parliamentary web site. You mentioned before, Ms Scott, that this is within the guidelines...</p>	Answered F&PA 45
HS2	DHS	Wong	F&PA 6 26/5/05	<p>Senator WONG—To your knowledge, had advice from PM&C been sought prior to the press coverage? Ms Scott—I would need to check, but the guidelines are available. Senator WONG—Had advice been sought from PM&C prior to the press coverage of this issue? Ms Scott—I am happy to check on that for you.</p>	Answer received 8/7/05
HS3	DHS	Wong	F&PA 6 26/5/05	<p>Senator WONG—Did anyone to your knowledge seek advice prior to May? Ms Scott—I am happy to check on that for you.</p>	Answer received 31/10/05
HS4	DHS	Wong	F&PA 12 & 14 26/5/05	<p>Senator WONG—I am very happy to have those, and we can go through them, but I am also interested in what overarching framework there is. Presumably, there is documentation that says 'please use this script' and 'here is the framework that we are</p>	Answer received 31/10/05

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
				<p>asking you to operate under'.</p> <p>Ms Scott—I will take the question on notice, because I do not want to commit to releasing a very time consuming swathe of documents.</p> <p>Senator WONG—How many documents are we talking about?</p> <p>Ms Scott—Because we commenced this activity almost from day one of the department and it is now seven months later, I think it would be better if we could narrow the request you have.</p> <p>Senator WONG—I am very happy to be cooperative, believe it or not, in that way. I am not interested in every day-to-day contact; I am interested in documentation that sets out the policy and procedures that the department is requiring Centrelink to operate under.</p> <p>Ms Scott—I will take that question on notice.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator WONG—So I guess the documentation we want to see is the outcomes from those meetings?</p> <p>Ms Scott—Yes, I think that is where I understood you to be.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator WONG—Are you taking the question about the outcomes and procedures on notice?</p> <p>Ms Scott—Yes.</p>	
HS5	DHS	Evans	F&PA 16 26/5/05	<p>Senator CHRIS EVANS—Can I ask the obvious question. It may have been asked before and I missed it. What is the number of contacts for each group? Are you actually speaking to one group more than the other?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—I do not have a split between partnered and single; I have an aggregate. We can seek a split between partnered and single, but I do not have it.</p> <p>Senator CHRIS EVANS—If you could on notice the provision of those figures it would be helpful. But you have been around a long time and you know how this works...</p>	Answer received 22/7/05
HS6	DHS	Wong	F&PA 16-17 26/5/05	<p>Senator WONG—So you do not know, of that 29,000, how many fall into each group?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—No. I can tell you that, to make the 29,000 contacts, we made 85,000 calls. But, once again, that is an aggregate. It is not split between the groups.</p> <p>Senator WONG—Are they off the same database?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—Effectively, yes.</p> <p>Senator WONG—Perhaps you can take those questions on notice.</p>	Answer received 22/7/05

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				Was the December 2004 decision to start doing that a ministerial directive?	
HS7	DHS	Evans	F&PA 17 26/5/05	Senator CHRIS EVANS—When did you change from that original script to this script?	Answer received 8/7/05
HS8	DHS	Moore	F&PA 18 26/5/05	Senator MOORE—Did you have a similar script in the period from December to the budget for this kind of heading? Mr Whalan—Yes, there was one. Senator MOORE—So there was a similar strategy in the department in the period from December to May which meant that every time someone who was receiving one of those two payments was in contact with the department the expectation would be that once they finished the business they would contact you or, vice-versa, you would tack this on the end. That was the strategy. Mr Whalan—That is right. Senator WONG—So where is the inbound script that this replaces? Mr Whalan—We can provide you with that.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS9	DHS	Wong	F&PA 18 26/5/05	Senator WONG—When was this new inbound script finalised? Ms Scott—Once again, I will have to take that on notice. I will try and get you an answer during the day. Senator WONG—Thank you.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS10	DHS	Wong	F&PA 19 26/5/05	Mr Whalan—Yes, we will. Just coming back to the last issue, in terms of key messages, we have said, 'It is important to remember that participation by recipients is voluntary.' I can go through the detail if you want me to. Senator WONG—Is that an instruction to staff? Mr Whalan—Yes. This is under the DSP rapid connection and reconnection initiative. Senator WONG—Could you provide us with a copy of that? Mr Whalan—Yes. Senator WONG—And could you provide us with an analogous instruction in relation to parenting payment recipients? Mr Whalan—Yes, we can.	Answer received 22/7/05
HS11	DHS	Wong	F&PA 23 26/5/05	Senator WONG—Did you provide raw data for analysis and, if so, when and to whom? Mr Whalan—I would have to take that on notice. The policy departments have regular access to a lot of the information and do not have to ask us for it, but I would have to check that.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS12	DHS	Wong	F&PA 24 26/5/05	Senator WONG—Again, what is the proportion of current recipients who have a child over the age of six?	Answer received 22/7/05

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				<p>Ms Hogg—We would have to take that on notice. Senator WONG—You do not have that data? Ms Hogg—I do not have that with me. Senator WONG—Do you have data which shows the proportion, approximately, of people who move into the over-six category each year? Ms Hogg—We would be able to extract that from the database. Senator WONG—Are you able to provide that? Ms Hogg—Yes.</p>	
HS13	DHS	Wong	F&PA 27 26/5/05	<p>Senator WONG—I am not asking what was decided. I am asking when this decision was made. Ms Scott—During that process. Senator WONG—Are you able to give me a date? Ms Scott—I am sure the department knows the date. Senator WONG—Can we find out from the department, then? Ms Scott—Yes. I guess it goes to whether we release the dates of cabinet decisions. I am looking for guidance here. The package was announced on budget night. I do not know whether it is necessary to tell you the hour and the day of the decision. CHAIR—The date itself is usually something that the committee can inquire into, but it cannot inquire into any of the workings or content thereof. Senator WONG—I am only asking the date, being aware of the parameters of what I can ask you. Ms Scott—I thank the committee for its guidance. Senator WONG—Are we going to get the date? Ms Scott—We will try to get the date, yes. Senator WONG—So you can come back to me before you leave, presumably. Ms Scott—I will see what we can do. Senator WONG—I would appreciate that.</p>	Answered F&PA 32
HS14	DHS	Evans	F&PA 30 26/5/05	<p>Senator CHRIS EVANS—So why the slight drop in 2008-09? I know it is not a big figure but I am trying to get a sense of what is happening. I am not suggesting it is all that significant a statistic; I am trying to understand what is happening. There is no backlog, you think. I thought at first you might have a bit more to do in the first year if the current system was, not grinding down but— Mr Leeper—I would be speculating. I do not have a precise answer. Senator CHRIS EVANS—Perhaps you could take it on notice as to</p>	Answer received 22/7/05

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				whether there is any assumption about them decreasing in the out years in 2008-09 and further on, or whether it is just— Mr Leeper—Yes.	
HS15	DHS	Moore	F&PA 45 26/5/05	Senator MOORE—Can you follow up one other thing for me on that same kind of theme. I know that people from other levels of government do get queries about a lot of your agencies, simply because of the client groups that are there. Can you follow up what system you have for seeing whether particular state members or other agencies are contacting the officers for help as well. It is often an issue in that some clients go to lots of places with their issues, and departments could be being contacted all over the place about one family. That is following through on some previous work that was done through audits about just how different agencies maintain that kind of outreach function. So it is all in the one box, if you could follow up on that as well. Ms Scott—Yes. I will take that on notice.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS16	CSA	Moore	F&PA 51 26/5/05	Senator MOORE—Minister, are they working directly with government? Senator Abetz—Are you inquiring about a particular group? Senator MOORE—A particular group called Family Advantage, who have made claims on their web site. Senator Abetz—I am not aware of that. I can take it on notice. Senator MOORE—Please take it on notice and give us information about the government's knowledge of them. Senator Abetz—Done.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS17	CSA	Evans	F&PA 53 26/5/05	Senator CHRIS EVANS—On notice, could you please ascertain the number of press releases issued by the policy and administrative minister on child support matters since the change in arrangements. Ms Scott—I think I may have all of Minister Hockey's press releases here. We may be able to give you an answer. Senator CHRIS EVANS—I have had a look at the site, so I have a rough idea. But maybe [you] should just take it on notice because I just want to be sure that someone else has checked and the figures I have are right. So if I could have both that would be great.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS18	Centrelink	Moore	F&PA 54 26/5/05	Senator MOORE—How long have you been doing that? I cannot remember when you started that, but I think it is well entrenched now in Centrelink. Mr Whalan—Yes. I will check whether anyone knows when we started. I do not have that in my mind, but we will see if we can find	Answer received 8/7/05

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				that out for you. The other thing—and it is more in the call centres than universally across the organisation—is that we have rooms available with computing facilities, toys, cots et cetera for people who have children who are ill enough so that they cannot go to school or the parents do not feel as if they can go to child care but well enough so that the parents can bring them into work.	
HS19	Centrelink	Wong	F&PA 67 26/5/05	Senator WONG—Do you understand that under statute the discretion lies with your organisation to require you to ensure that there is an independent assessment of the material presented to you by Job Network seeking that a person be suspended? Mr Whalan—I would like to either take some advice or take that on notice. You are suggesting that it does but I would like to either take some advice or take it on notice.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS20	Centrelink	Wong	F&PA 71 26/5/05	Senator WONG—I have a question about the DSP rapid connection and reconnection initiative, which Ms McGregor could take on notice. There is a reference to questions and answers on that in the scripts which I have been provided with. Could you provide the script and/or the question and answers which are utilised in the rapid connection initiative. They are referred to in the script. I would prefer it if you could provide the answer soon so that we have the opportunity to look at it during the estimates period. Mr Whalan—We will take that on notice.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS21	Centrelink	Allison	F&PA 71 26/5/05	Senator ALLISON—My first question probably needs to be taken on notice, and I apologise if it has been asked before. Tell me if anything I ask has already been dealt with. How many first, second and third breaches were imposed in 2004 on newstart allowance recipients who had been in receipt of payments for more than three years? Is it possible to distinguish between administrative and activity breaches and to specify how many eight-week payment suspensions were imposed? Mr Whalan—We do not have that detail here. We will take that on notice and will try and provide you with as much of that as we are able.	Answer received 25/7/05
HS22	Centrelink	Allison	F&PA 74 26/5/05	Senator ALLISON—Will the non-activity tested parenting payment recipients still have access to JET child-care assistance and funds for training? Mr Whalan—We will take that on notice.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS23	Centrelink	Allison	F&PA 74 26/5/05	Senator ALLISON—Could you also take on notice the current allocation, the number of places and the cost? How has that	Answer received 22/7/05

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				<p>changed, or how is that proposed to be changed, from previous years? Mr Whalan—Yes, we can.</p>	
HS24	Centrelink	Allison	F&PA 75 26/5/05	<p>Senator ALLISON—Yes, but will you report automatically? Mr Whalan—They will be reported to me automatically. Senator ALLISON—And you will report when requested, or will it go on the web site, or report to the annual report or the parliament or— Mr Whalan—I am happy to provide public information. Let me make a judgment about how to best do that. I am happy to provide you with advice about that. Senator ALLISON—I am thinking about more into the future rather than now—I see, you want to give advice about how the trends will be reported. Mr Whalan—I am happy to provide you with advice about how I intend to do it. Senator ALLISON—Good. I understand.</p>	Answer received 22/7/05
HS25	HIC	McLucas	F&PA 77-79 26/5/05	<p>Senator McLUCAS—I am getting to that point. I just wanted to know in the broad. At the end of March 2004, how many people were registered on the safety net? Ms Argall—That is probably a level of detail that we would need to take on notice if we were going back over many months. As I said, we are providing the detail of information on a daily basis and on a weekly basis, so that means going back through weekly reports that have previously been provided. ... Senator McLUCAS—I am looking for the number of people who were registered for the safety net, and I have a number of dates that I want to pursue. Is it possible to provide the figure as at the end of March 2000? Ms O'Connell—Yes. Ms Argall—Can we get the dates, and then it is probably better if we make sure we give you the accurate information off these reports. If we can take the dates and the information you are seeking— Senator McLUCAS—March 2004, April 2004, May 2004, June 2004. Then I am looking for the figures right through until the end of August 2004. Then, on notice, I would be interested to know the levels, on a monthly basis, of people who have registered for the safety net up to now. Ms Argall—Just to be clear, you are interested in all of the</p>	Answer received 31/10/05

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				<p>information that we just described? Senator McLUCAS—I am looking for all of it on a monthly basis up to now, but particularly I would like to talk about those months from March 2004 through to August 2004. Ms Argall—That is something we will need to provide you on notice. It is a lot of information that we will need to collect and provide back to you. ... Senator McLUCAS—As I have described, I am looking for the number of people who were registered to the Medicare safety net at those dates. Ms Scott—For clarification, you want it broken down into individuals and families where we can do that? Senator McLUCAS—Yes. So registered as an individual, registered as a family. ... Senator McLUCAS—I need to know the number of registrations and, if possible, the separation between families and individuals. The other thing I am interested in knowing is how many people reached those thresholds at those same dates. How many people reached the family threshold and how many people reached the individual threshold, starting from March 2004 to current? Ms Argall—Yes.</p>	
HS26	HIC	McLucas	F&PA 82 26/5/05	<p>Senator McLUCAS—I am trying to ascertain what data was being provided to the Department of Health and Ageing by HIC at that time. Ms Argall—We have said there were deidentified daily data transfers between the Health Insurance Commission and the Department of Health and Ageing. If you would like information on the full data set that is provided on a daily basis, we can provide that to you on notice. Senator McLUCAS—But currently it is different to what was happening in February and March of 2004? Ms Argall—Not as far as I am aware. There was an additional weekly report that was produced after the introduction of the safety net. Senator McLUCAS—If you could table that, it might be of assistance. Ms Argall—I will take that on notice.</p>	Answer received 22/7/05

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS27	HIC	McLucas	F&PA 82-83 26/5/05	<p>Senator McLUCAS—So HIC is providing safety net information by electorate to the department on a regular basis? Is that part of the weekly report or another report?</p> <p>Ms Argall—I would have to check the exact date and exactly how much information was provided in relation to that particular release.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator McLUCAS—When do you think you could provide us with the information about, firstly, the date that the separate report was provided to the department? I would also like to know which section of the department requested it.</p>	Answer received 8/7/05
HS28	HIC	McLucas	F&PA 83 26/5/05	<p>Senator McLUCAS—What other separate reports has the department requested of HIC outside the normal daily and weekly reporting?</p> <p>Ms Argall—That may well be reasonably extensive. We are getting down to a level of detail and, I am sorry, I will have to take that on notice.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator McLUCAS—Could you provide the committee with information on the number of times the Department of Health and Ageing has requested safety net data by electorate and provide a copy of that data? Ms Scott, I think you would be aware of the discussion, not in this committee but in the Community Affairs Committee, about by-electorate data. You may or you may not be aware of that. It is an issue that this committee is interested in. The minister has put one view about the cost of preparing bulk-billing figures by electorate, but it would seem that he is prepared to wear the cost of safety net figures by electorate. So this committee is interested in knowing how many times DOHA has requested the HIC undertake a by-electorate analysis of data—in this case, the safety net data.</p> <p>Ms Argall—I will take that question on notice.</p>	Answer received 8/7/05
HS29	HIC	McLucas	F&PA 83-84 26/5/05	<p>Senator McLUCAS—Could we get those reports as well, given that they have been prepared and there is no cost associated with re-preparing them? If possible, we would like to see it in terms of the two thresholds: those who are individuals and how the individual family is split; and those people who are eligible—you may not be able to do this, but the relationship with Centrelink might improve it—because they are family tax benefit A recipients. There is a series of other differentials that might be able to be provided that I</p>	Answer received 8/7/05

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				will put on notice to you. I ask that question with a proviso: if that data has already been prepared then this committee would be interested in it; if it will have to be prepared then I think you should tell the committee that that is the case. Do you understand what I am asking? Ms Scott—Yes. We can look at your request.	
HS30	HIC	McLucas	F&PA 86 26/5/05	Ms Argall—As a full report, it has only been provided once by the HIC. Senator McLUCAS—When was that? Ms Argall—I would rather not guess. Senator Abetz—Can you take it on notice. Ms Argall—Unless we have the information here, I will take that on notice. Senator McLUCAS—If it is here, that would be great. Otherwise, we will have it on notice. Ms Argall—No, we do not have the data with us.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS31	HIC	McLucas	F&PA 86 26/5/05	Senator McLUCAS—I you get that as quickly as you can, that would be terrific. I want to go to see some specific data sets, separate from the other questions. Has the HIC provided the department with specific data on access to IVF procedures? Ms Argall—Have we provided specific reports? Senator McLUCAS—A specific report, or a separate report. Ms Scott—Like an analytical report, or are you after data sets again? Senator McLUCAS—Data sets, or an analytical report. Ms Argall—I think this goes to the regular routine transfer of data. All of the payments that we make are part of the regular daily data exchange with the Department of Health and Ageing. It is not necessary for them to ask us for specific reports. But, if you would like me to check, I can take it on notice to see whether we have been requested to provide any particular reports.	Answer received 8/7/05
HS32	Aust. Hearing	Crossin	F&PA 91 26/5/05	Senator CROSSIN—Is it right that there is a loading applied for remote locations? Ms Green—That is correct. Senator CROSSIN—What is that loading currently? Ms Green—We would have to take that on notice.	Answer received 22/7/05
HS33	Aust. Hearing	Crossin	F&PA 92 26/5/05	Senator CROSSIN—Can you take on notice for me then whether or not any centres have failed to meet their targets in travel time associated with servicing remote communities?	Answer received 22/7/05

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
				Ms Green—Certainly. ... Senator CROSSIN—What I want to know is whether there are any centres visiting remote communities that have not met their target? That should be fairly easy based on how you measure it. Ms Scott—We just want to clarify it so we do not get the wrong end of the stick. If the target is expressed in hours spent in a remote community—not actually the travel time getting there—and let us say someone thought that you could get there and spend four hours in the community, you want to know how many times the target time has not been met. Senator CROSSIN—Correct. Ms Scott—Okay.	
HS34	Aust. Hearing	Crossin	F&PA 93 26/5/05	Senator CROSSIN—Can you provide me with figures on resignations for each year for the last five years? Senator Abetz—Is that reasonably obtainable? Ms Scott—Would it be acceptable to give you organisational turnover—just the sort of figures we gave you then—for the last couple of years? Senator CROSSIN—You can. I am just interested to know how many out of that would have resigned. Ms Scott—Yes, I understand. I am just trying to think of the costs associated with dipping into files to find out whether someone resigned, retired— Senator CROSSIN—It is not a statistic you keep automatically on your staff when they leave? Ms Scott—Can we take it on notice and see how easy it is to obtain?	Answer received 22/7/05
HS35	CSA	Mason	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS36	Centrelink	Mason	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS37	DHS	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 8/7/05
HS38	CSA	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 8/7/05
HS39	CRS Australia	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 8/7/05
HS40	Centrelink	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received

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					8/7/05
HS41	HIC	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 8/7/05
HS42	Aust. Hearing	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 8/7/05
HS43	DHS	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 6/2/06
HS44	CSA	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS45	CRS Australia	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS46	Centrelink	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS47	HIC	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS48	Aust. Hearing	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS49	DHS	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 2/11/05
HS50	CSA	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS51	CRS Australia	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS52	Centrelink	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS53	HIC	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS54	Aust. Hearing	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 6/2/06
HS55	DHS	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 6/2/06
HS56	CSA	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 6/2/06
HS57	CRS Australia	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 8/7/05
HS58	Centrelink	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS59	HIC	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
					22/7/05
HS60	Aust. Hearing	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 2/11/05
HS61	DHS	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 25/7/05
HS62	CSA	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS63	CRS Australia	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 25/7/05
HS64	Centrelink	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS65	HIC	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS66	Aust. Hearing	Carr	Written	Attached	Answer received 31/10/05
HS67	Centrelink	Nettle	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS68	DHS	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 31/10/05
HS69	DHS	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS70	DHS	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS71	DHS	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS72	DHS	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS73	DHS	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS74	CSA	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 8/7/05
HS75	CSA	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 8/7/05
HS76	CSA	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 8/7/05
HS77	CSA	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS78	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received

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					8/7/05
HS79	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS80	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 31/10/05
HS81	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 22/7/05
HS82	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Transferred to CA Committee 15/6/05
HS83	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 31/10/05
HS84	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 28/10/05
HS85	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 28/10/05
HS86	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 28/10/05
HS87	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 31/10/05
HS88	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 31/10/05
HS89	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 28/10/05
HS90	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 28/10/05
HS91	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 28/10/05
HS92	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 17/02/06
HS93	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 31/10/05
HS94	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 6/2/06
HS95	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 31/10/05
HS96	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 6/2/06
HS97	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
					28/10/05
HS98	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 28/10/05
HS99	Centrelink	Evans	Written	Attached	Answer received 28/10/05
HS100	HIC	Nettle	Written	Attached	Transferred from CA Committee 10/6/05 Part 2 of question amended 27/6/05 Due date: 27/7/05 Answer received 31/10/05
HS101	Centrelink	Wong	F&PA 59 26/5/05	Senator WONG—I am just trying to get a sense as to what the general proposition is. If they have a job seeker diary, is it six to 10 inclusive per fortnight and, if they do not have a job seeker diary, is it at least four applications a fortnight? Ms Hogg—I will have to take that on notice.	Answer received 25/7/05
HS102	Centrelink	Evans	F&PA 60 26/5/05	Mr Whalan—I am going to assume that is the case, and I will get the figures. But, yes, it will cost us to implement it and there will be a saving overall. Senator CHRIS EVANS—I would like both those figures, if you can provide them...	Answer received 31/10/05
HS103	Centrelink	Evans	F&PA 63 26/5/05	Ms Scott—This measure is expected to benefit just over 18,750 customers. Senator CHRIS EVANS—And how many is it estimated to hurt? Ms Scott—I will see if we can ascertain those figures for you...	Answer received 2/11/05
HS104	Centrelink	Wong	F&PA 23 26/5/05	Senator WONG—Could you let us know what data was provided, when and to whom. In relation to parenting payment recipients, I think you indicated earlier that you have a database which enables you to access information about the age of the youngest child. Mr Whalan—Correct.	Answer received 31/10/05
HS105	Centrelink	Carr	Written	Attached	Transferred from EWR&E committee 15/6/05 DUE 15 July 2005 Answer received 31/10/05

Please note that answers are due on 8 July 2005

Written QON

HS35

Child Support Agency

- 1) For each of the last four financial or calendar years for which this information is available:
 - a) what was the average number of sick leave days taken per full-time equivalent employee;
 - b) what was the average number of days of unscheduled absence (encompassing all types of leave) taken per full-time equivalent employee.
 - 2) Does the agency collect, collate and analyse data about unscheduled absence and/or sick leave, for example, which days of the week that employees are away, reasons for absence, dates of absence, employee's age, gender, length of service and work unit location?
 - 3) Does the agency record the number and/or percentage of working days lost due to unscheduled absence and/or sick leave in the Annual Report?
 - 4) Does the agency record the cost of unscheduled absence and/or sick leave in annual financial statements?
-

HS36

Centrelink

- 1) For each of the last four financial or calendar years for which this information is available:
 - c) what was the average number of sick leave days taken per full-time equivalent employee;
 - d) what was the average number of days of unscheduled absence (encompassing all types of leave) taken per full-time equivalent employee.
 - 2) Does the agency collect, collate and analyse data about unscheduled absence and/or sick leave, for example, which days of the week that employees are away, reasons for absence, dates of absence, employee's age, gender, length of service and work unit location?
 - 3) Does the agency record the number and/or percentage of working days lost due to unscheduled absence and/or sick leave in the Annual Report?
 - 4) Does the agency record the cost of unscheduled absence and/or sick leave in annual financial statements?
-

HS37 to HS42

A follow-up to a question Senator Ludwig asked in December ...

1. Regarding the employees that your department or agency has identified as having:

- (a) fluency
 - (b) accredited translator
 - (c) accredited interpreter
2. Of these employees, please indicate what the department is doing in order to make full use of its employees skills in this regard, and please provide a breakdown of this between employees whose accreditation was paid for by the department and those whose were not?
-

HS43

Legal service expenditure

1. What amount did the Department spend during the financial year 2004/2005 on outsourced legal practitioners (including private firms, individuals, the Australian Government Solicitor, and any others)?
 2. What was the budgeted amount for outsourced legal practitioners in 2004/2005?
 3. What amount did the Department spend on internal legal services? (Provide an estimate if exact amount is unavailable.)
 4. Does the Department have an in-house legal section? If so, what was the 2004/2005 actual cost of this section? What was the budgeted amount for this section in 2004/2005? What is the budget amount for this section in 2005/2006?
 5. What is the total projected expenditure on legal services for 2005/2006 for the Department?
 6. Which organisations or individuals were contracted to provide legal services to the Department in 2004/2005?
 7. In each instance, how much was each organisation or individual paid for these services?
 8. Does the Department use an open tendering or select tendering process (as described in the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines, p 42) when procuring legal services?
 9. If a select tendering process is used: (a) which method of select tendering is used and (b) which firms or individuals are currently eligible to tender for legal services?
 10. If a multi-use list is used: (a) which firms or individuals are currently on that list and (b) when was the list last opened for applications?
 11. In 2004/2005 did the Department obtain any legal services using a direct sourcing procurement process? If so, provide details including the name of the provider, the work involved and the cost?
 12. In 2004/2005 did the Department procure any legal services under the thresholds required for 'covered procurements' (within the meaning of 8.6 of the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines)? If so, provide details including the name of the provider, the work involved and the cost.
 13. In 2004/05 did the Department contract any legal firms to provide services other than legal services (such as consulting, conduct of policy reviews etc)? If so, provide details including the name of the firm, the project involved and the cost of the contract.
-

HS44 to HS48

Legal services expenditure

1. What amount did the Agency spend during the financial year 2004/2005 on outsourced legal practitioners (including private firms, individuals, the Australian Government Solicitor, and any others)?
 2. What was the budgeted amount for outsourced legal practitioners in 2004/2005?
 3. What amount did the Agency spend on internal legal services? (Provide an estimate if exact amount is unavailable.)
 4. Does the Agency have an in-house legal section? If so, what was the 2004/2005 actual cost of this section? What was the budgeted amount for this section in 2004/2005? What is the budget amount for this section in 2005/2006?
 5. What is the total projected expenditure on legal services for 2005/2006 for the Agency?
 6. Which organisations or individuals were contracted to provide legal services to the Agency in 2004/2005?
 7. In each instance, how much was each organisation or individual paid for these services?
 8. Does the Agency use an open tendering or select tendering process (as described in the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines, p 42) when procuring legal services?
 9. If a select tendering process is used: (a) which method of select tendering is used and (b) which firms or individuals are currently eligible to tender for legal services?
 10. If a multi-use list is used: (a) which firms or individuals are currently on that list and (b) when was the list last opened for applications?
 11. In 2004/2005 did the Agency obtain any legal services using a direct sourcing procurement process? If so, provide details including the name of the provider, the work involved and the cost?
 12. In 2004/2005 did the Agency procure any legal services under the thresholds required for 'covered procurements' (within the meaning of 8.6 of the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines)? If so, provide details including the name of the provider, the work involved and the cost.
 13. In 2004/05 did the Agency contract any legal firms to provide services other than legal services (such as consulting, conduct of policy reviews etc)? If so, provide details including the name of the firm, the project involved and the cost of the contract.
-

HS49 to HS54

Performance pay

1. Is performance pay available under your department/agencies certified agreement?
2. If so how many staff in your Department/Agency are eligible for performance based pay?
3. Please provide a breakdown of performance pay awarded for this financial year to date including the following details:

- (a) How many staff have received performance pay?
 - (b) What levels are those staff at?
 - (c) What gender, a breakdown please?
 - (d) How much has each staff member received?
 - (e) When did they receive it?
 - (f) What was the rationale for the awarding of performance pay in each instance?
 - (g) Did the Department/Agency head receive performance pay?
 - (h) How much?
 - (i) When?
 - (j) On what grounds?
-

HS55 to HS60

Efficiency Dividend

1. What financial impact will the increased efficiency dividend have on your Department/agency this financial year and in the out years?
 2. The increase in the efficiency dividend was announced in last year's elections, what plans have you made to meet it?
 3. What will this mean for staff numbers?
 4. Will any specific programs be cut? Please specify which ones and the size of the estimated savings?
 5. Will any core functions be affected by these savings measures?
 6. How will meeting the efficiency dividend affect your graduate recruitment plans?
 7. How will meeting the efficiency dividend affect your ability to retain experienced staff?
-

HS61 to HS66

AWAs

1. How many staff are covered by AWAs in your Agency/Department?
2. Can you provide a break down of AWA's by gender and by classification?

3. Can you tell me how many of the staff on AWA's are paid more than the band for their classification under the certified agreement?
 4. Why were these staff not simply promoted to a higher classification?
-

HS67

TPV holders and Centrelink payments

1. How many temporary protection visa holders have had their application for Special Benefit refused or payment of such benefits cancelled on the ground that they are enrolled as a full-time student in an educational institution? (Social Security Act 1991, s737(1))
 2. How many of these refusals and cancellations occurred on the basis of a temporary protection visa holder being enrolled on a full-time basis in a:
 - (a) university course;
 - (b) TAFE course.
 3. What considerations are taken into account by Centrelink in exercising its discretion to approve courses in which temporary protection visa holders can be enrolled on a full-time basis ('allowable courses') and still continue to receive the Special Benefit? (Social Security Act 1991, s731A(7)(iii), s737(3)(a))
 4. Does Centrelink or the Department of Immigration inform TPV holders that enrolling in particular courses will make them ineligible for the Special Benefit? If not, will they now institute such a procedure? If not, why not?
 5. What are the reasons for Centrelink's policy in restricting the allowable courses to those with a duration of less than a year? (Guide to Social Security Law, 3.7.5.70, "Study for SpB Customers")
-

HS68

Increase in efficiency dividend

1. What is the total value of the 1.25 per cent efficiency dividend that Human Services will now have to hand back to Government in each of the next four financial years?
 2. Please provide a full breakdown of how the 1.25 per cent worth of efficiencies will be funded?
 3. Will there have to be any staff cuts within the Department itself? If so, please indicate how many staff will be affected.
 4. Will there have to be staff cuts in the CSA or the CRS? If so, please indicate how many staff will be affected.
-

HS69

Staffing

Please provide an update of the staffing table that was provided in response to question on notice HS 1 from February Estimates.

HS70

Human Services involvement in Welfare Reform Taskforce

1. Please indicate the period/s in which Human Services officials worked as part of the Welfare Reform Taskforce in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (provide dates for each occasion that this occurred).
 2. Please also indicate the classification of all Human Services officials who worked as part of the PM&C taskforce.
-

HS71

Comprehensive Work Capacity Assessments

Please provide a full breakdown of how the \$316 million allocated to the Department of Human Services in the budget for comprehensive work capacity assessments will be spent.

HS72

Pre-vocational Assistance Participation Account

Please provide a full breakdown of how the \$80.5 million allocated to the Department of Human Services in the budget for the pre-vocational assistance participation account will be spent.

HS73

Post-budget community broadcast

1. What was the total cost of the 2005-06 federal post-budget community broadcast that was held on 25 May 2005?
2. Were other post-budget community broadcasts conducted? Or was the broadcast on 25 May the only one that was held?
3. If there were others, please provide a full list and the full cost of each.

4. For each broadcast that was held:

- (a) Provide a full breakdown of all costs involved in holding the broadcast (food, drink, venue hire, videoconference facilities, materials, etc).
 - (b) Please list all locations that received the broadcast.
 - (c) Was the broadcast an 'invitation-only' event? Why?
 - (d) If it was an invitation-only event, please provide a full list of all organisations/individuals invited to attend the broadcast.
 - (e) Please provide a copy of the Ministerial transcripts from the broadcast.
 - (f) Please supply a transcript of all questions and answers from the broadcast.
-

HS74

Staffing

Please provide an update to the information provided in response to part (1) of question on notice HS 16 from February Estimates.

HS75

Appointment of new agency head

1. How much was paid to Fletcher Executive Search under the terms of the contract to recruit a new agency head?
 2. Please provide a full breakdown of this expenditure (basic fee, accommodation, airfares etc).
-

HS76

Child support payers and recipients

Please update the information in response to question on notice HS 17 from February Estimates by providing the same table as at June 2005.

HS77

Legal expenses

1. Please indicate how much was spent on legal services by the Child Support Agency in 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05.
 2. For each of these financial years, please provide a list of all legal firms that were paid by the CSA for legal services. Please also indicate how much was paid to these legal firms in each of these years.
-

HS78

Staffing

Please provide a table showing a full breakdown of Centrelink staff by classification, age, location, gender, full-time/part-time status etc as at June 2005.

HS79

Centrelink involvement in Welfare Reform Taskforce

1. Please indicate the period/s in which Centrelink officials worked as part of the Welfare Reform Taskforce in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (provide dates for each occasion that this occurred).
 2. Please also indicate the classification of all Centrelink officials who worked as part of the PM&C taskforce.
-

HS80

Review of payment recipients' property holdings

1. Can Centrelink please figures for the 2004-05 financial year in the format used in the response to question on notice HS 41 from February Estimates.
 2. Please indicate the number of payments cancelled as a result of real estate reviews in 2004-05 in each State and Territory.
 3. Please indicate the number of payments cancelled as a result of real estate reviews in 2004-05 in each federal electorate.
 4. Please indicate the number of payments reduced as a result of real estate reviews in 2004-05 in each State and Territory.
 5. Please indicate the number of payments reduced as a result of real estate reviews in 2004-05 in each federal electorate.
 6. What is the process for reducing or cancelling payments?
 7. Are customers informed of Centrelink's intention to cancel/reduce payments by letter?
 8. If payments are cancelled or reduced, what information are customers given about available appeal and review mechanisms?
-

HS81

Funding for 'improved compliance regime' provided through 2005 budget

1. At the Estimates hearing on 26 May 2005 (see Hansard, page 59), Mr Whalan outlined five compliance measures that were funded through the 2005 budget. Is it the case that the five measures outlined by Mr Whalan are being funded through the \$198.2 million that Centrelink has been allocated for an 'improved compliance regime' as part of the welfare changes announced in the budget? Or are some of these five measures being funded separately?
 2. Please indicate which of the five measures outlined by Mr Whalan are being funded from the \$198.2 million allocated for 'improved compliance regime', and which of the measures are being funded separately.
 3. Can Centrelink now provide a full breakdown of how the \$198.2 million that it was allocated (via the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) for 'improved compliance regime' as part of the welfare changes announced in the budget will be spent?
-

HS82 (TRANSFERRED TO THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE)

Detection and prevention of incorrect age pension payments arising from overseas income

1. What is the timetable for the introduction of this measure in regard to the different national groups affected?
 2. This scheme, when fully operational is estimated to make automatic adjustments to the pensions of 135,000 pensioners. How many other people on the age pension, and also receiving an overseas pension, will not be covered by this scheme and will continue to have their Australian pension unaffected by their overseas pension indexation? (That is, what arrangements will apply to Australian pensioners who also receive an overseas pension from a country not on the list for this initiative?)
 3. Please indicate how many Australian pensioners also receive pensions from overseas countries. Please break this information up by country and class of pension/payment.
 4. What arrangements will be made for the repayment of debts raised as a result of this initiative?
 5. Were debt repayments by Dutch pensioners pegged at \$25 per fortnight?
 6. Will a similar arrangement be made for those affected by the new budget measure?
 7. What schemes have been put in place over previous years to educate and inform people about their obligations to declare indexation changes in their overseas pensions?
-

HS83

Debt prevention research and development

1. Please provide a full breakdown of how the \$14.5 million allocated to Centrelink over the next two financial years will be spent.
 2. How many staff will be working on this initiative in each of these two years?
 3. Please provide details of the work that will be done under this initiative.
 4. How important are the activities undertaken with this funds? Why are there no funds allocated beyond 2006-07?
-

HS84

Income support customers

For the following payment types:

1. Family Tax Benefit Part A
2. Family Tax Benefit Part B
3. Maternity Payment
4. Maternity Immunisation Allowance
5. Parenting Payment
6. Double Orphan Pension
7. Carer Allowance
8. Age Pension
9. Disability Support Pension
10. Wide Pension
11. Bereavement Allowance
12. Widow B Pension
13. Carer Payment
14. Newstart Allowance
15. Youth Allowance
16. Austudy Payment
17. Partner Allowance
18. Sickness Allowance

19. Widow Allowance
20. Mature Age Allowance
21. Special Benefit
22. Mobility Allowance
23. Remote Area Allowance
24. Crisis Payment

Please provide the following information:

- (a) The total number of people receiving the payment
- (b) The age breakdown of people receiving the payment
- (c) The gender of people receiving the payment
- (d) The number of people receiving the payment in each state and territory

(Please provide these figures for the 2004 and 2005 (to date) calendar years.)

HS85

Parenting payment (single) customers

1. For the 2002, 2003 and 2004 calendar years, please indicate the number of parents in receipt of parenting payment (single).
 2. Please provide a breakdown of how many parents in each state and territory were in receipt of parenting payment (single) in 2002, 2003 and 2004.
 3. Please indicate the total number of dependent children of parenting payment (single) recipients in 2002, 2003 and 2004.
 4. In each of these years, please indicate how many of these children were (a) aged under 6, (b) aged between 6 and 12, and (c) between 13 and 16.
-

HS86

Disability support pension customers

1. For the 2002, 2003 and 2004 calendar years, please indicate the number of people in receipt of disability support pension.
2. How many people were on the DSP as at 10 May 2005?
3. Please provide a full breakdown of these figures by age, gender, state/territory and federal electorate.

HS87

Breaching/compliance statistics

1. For Newstart, Special Benefit, Youth Allowance and Parenting Payment customers, for each month since September 2003, please indicate:
 - (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 8 week payment suspension a third or subsequent activity test breach.

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

(Please break up this information by payment type, state/territory, federal electorate, age of customer, gender of customer and aboriginality of customer.)
 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?
-

HS88

Centrelink call centres

1. In the 2003, 2004 and 2005 (to date) calendar years, what has been the total number of telephone calls to Centrelink call centre numbers?
 2. In the 2003, 2004 and 2005 (to date) calendar years, what is the average time taken for callers to Centrelink call centre numbers to be connected with Centrelink customer service officers (that is, what is the average waiting time for callers to Centrelink call centre numbers)?
-

HS89

Marriage-like relationships

1. Please update all of the tables provided in response to question on notice HS 44 from February Estimates to include data for the 2004-05 financial year (to date).
 2. How does Centrelink determine whether people are living in a 'marriage like' relationship?
 3. In relation to the Medical Service Update – Disability Support Pension form, what is the purpose of question 25 of this form (see page 8 of the form)?
 4. Has Centrelink received any complaints about this question? Please provide details of complaints received about this question, and the action that Centrelink took in response.
-

HS90

Seniors' concession allowance

1. On what dates has the seniors' concession allowance been paid to date?
 2. For each occasion on which the allowance has been paid:
 - (a) How many payments were made?
 - (b) What has been the total amount paid?
 - (c) What was the average payment made?
 3. What was the process for paying the allowance to eligible customers? Were eligible customers automatically paid the allowance? Did eligible customers have to nominate a bank account, or were existing bank account details used by Centrelink to make the payment?
 4. Is there a time limit in which eligible customers have to inform Centrelink of their bank account details for this payment?
 5. Are customers specifically informed of this time limit in correspondence advising them to supply bank account details to Centrelink? If not, why not?
-

HS91

Withdrawal of concession cards while customers are overseas

1. What are the arrangements for withdrawing pensioner concession cards from customers while they are overseas?
 2. What is the purpose of withdrawing concession cards from eligible customers while they are overseas?
 3. Have pensioner concession card holders always been required to surrender their card when they go overseas? On what date did this arrangement start?
 4. What arrangements are in place to ensure that customers who surrender their concession card while overseas can still access concessions on electricity, gas, water, motor vehicle registration and other charges that continue to accrue while customers are overseas?
 5. If there are no arrangements in place for this purpose, why is this the case? What does Centrelink do (if anything) to ensure that customers can access relevant concessions for the period of overseas travel on their return from overseas?
-

HS92

Debt management

1. Please provide an update (covering the 2004-05 financial year to date) of tables 4 and 5 on pages 51 and 52 of the Centrelink Annual Report 2003-04.
 2. Please provide a table showing a full breakdown (by payment type and value of debt raised) of debts raised in 2004-05 (to date)
 3. What is the total value of debts that have been recovered by Centrelink in the 2004-05 financial year (to date).
 4. Please provide a full breakdown of the cause (ie payment type) of all debts recovered in 2004-05 (to date).
 5. Please provide a table listing of all private debt collection agencies used by Centrelink, the commencement of the contract with the agency, the expiry date of the contract, the value of the contract, and how much has been paid to the agency under the contract to date.
 6. Do any of Centrelink's contracts with private sector debt collection agencies have performance/incentive bonuses of any kind built into the contract? Please provide all details of all such bonus arrangements.
 7. Are private debt collection agencies required to follow Centrelink debt collection guidelines when undertaking debt collection activities for Centrelink? If not, why not? If so, please supply a copy of the guidelines.
 8. How much Centrelink debt has been recovered by Dun & Bradstreet in 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 (to date)? Please indicate the value of the debts recovered in these years, and the number of customers repaying these debts.
 9. What level of debt has been recovered by credit card by Dun & Bradstreet in 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 (to date)?
 10. Is Centrelink party to the Debt Collection Guidelines that are issued by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission?
 11. If not, why not? How is adherence to best practice ensured if Centrelink is not a signatory to these guidelines?
-

HS93

Centrelink debt recovery

1. Please provide copies of the 2002-03 and 2003-04 Centrelink Compliance Activity Reports? If not, why not?
 2. Will a 2004-05 Centrelink Compliance Report be available? If not, why not?
 3. Please provide a progress report on Centrelink's response to the 2004 ANAO report into Management of Centrelink Debt Recovery?
 4. Could the officers outline the new streamlined approach taken by debt recovery officers since October 2004? Are there any e-references and other material that we could have which would explain this approach to us?
 5. What has been the result of this new approach? (That is, what is the number of clients who have been placed on less than standard rates of withholdings (in total and by payment type)? Are these new or old debts? What percentage of debts are on lower rates of withholdings compared to other debts?
 6. What measures are in place to inform customers of these new arrangements?
 7. As a result of the changes, and response from clients to the streamlined approach, have any views been formed as to whether the standard rate of recovery is placing particular clients in financial hardship?
-

HS94

Family tax benefit debts

1. Can we find out, for the last three financial years (2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05) the number and value of family tax benefit debts that have been waived under the provisions of the Act relating to administrative error and severe financial hardship?
 2. How does this compare to the total number/value of FTB debts?
 3. In relation to the \$600 per child supplement, if, as a result of a debt a customer receives nothing or less than the full entitlement, are these customers informed of their rights to appeal the raising of the debt? If not, why not?
 4. Could we be provided with a copy the advice that goes to customers about this matter?
 5. Please provide a summary table showing the number of reviews/appeals of these cases, and whether these appeals were upheld/rejected by (a) AROs, (b) SSAT, and (c) AAT?
-

HS95

Use by Jobseekers of facsimile machines in Centrelink offices

1. What resources are generally made available to job seekers in Centrelink offices to assist with their job seeking activities?

2. Are facsimile machines in Centrelink offices generally made available to job seekers for this purpose?
 3. Is a facsimile machine at the Ettalong Centrelink office available for use by job seekers? If not, why not?
 4. Is a facsimile machine and a computer at the Stones Corner Centrelink office available for use by job seekers? If not, why not?
 5. Going back to June 2004, please supply a list of all equipment at Centrelink offices (by office) that was previously available for use by job seekers but is now no longer available to these people.
-

HS96

Provision of customer information to marketing firms

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 of the Centrelink Annual Report 2003-04)? What work have these organisations been doing?
 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.
-

HS97

Youth allowance debts

1. Please provide full details of the number of and value of debts raised by Centrelink from students receiving Youth Allowance who went from studying full time, to part time?
 2. Please provide a summary table showing the number of these debts that were appealed to Authorised Review Officers, SSAT and AAT over the last three financial years, and indicate whether the appeal was upheld/rejected at each of these stages.
 3. How many youth allowance debts have been referred to the Director of Public Prosecution, for each of the last three financial years? Please provide details.
-

HS98

Prosecutions

In each of the last three financial years:

- (a) How many Centrelink customers have been prosecuted by the Director of Public Prosecutions?
 - (b) How many of these customers have had legal representation?
 - (c) In terms of those prosecuted, over the past three financial years, could we have a breakdown of the range of sentences handed down, broken down by gender?
 - (d) How much of the DPP's financial resources and staff time is taken up dealing with Social Security prosecutions?
-

HS99

Crisis payment

1. How many people have received the Crisis Payment in each of the last five financial years (including 2004-05 to date).
2. For each of these five years, please break up this information by gender, age, state/territory and federal electorate.
3. For each of these five years, please also provide:
 - (a) A breakdown of how many recipients were from Non-English Speaking backgrounds.
 - (b) A breakdown of how many recipients have received the payment because they have been removed from the home as result of their violence to their partner and/or children.
 - (c) A breakdown of what social security payments they were receiving when they were approved to receive a crisis payment.
 - (d) A breakdown of how many women have received the payment because they have been victims of domestic violence and have had to leave their home.
4. In relation to the response to question on notice HS 46 from February Estimates:
 - (a) What was the purpose of the review of crisis payment?
 - (b) What were its main findings?

- (c) What has been the Government's response?
 - (d) What action will be taken in response to the findings in the report?
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HS100

1. There have been recent reports that the Health Insurance Commission has successfully prosecuted a provider of pregnancy termination services for illegal billing. Can you provide details about this?
 2. Can you confirm that it is now illegal for a service provider to bulk bill and charge for use of an anaesthetic if the provider is not licensed? If so, what are the implications of this for access to termination services?
 3. Can you confirm that, as a result of this change that unlicensed providers or providers who choose not to use a general anaesthetic will now have to charge an up-front fee of approximately \$500 to provide a pregnancy termination service?
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HS105

ABSTUDY

1. You have provided a list of the four ABSTUDY processing centres that have remained after closure of ten centres.
 2. Where were the ten located?
 3. What has happened to the staff of these centres? How many were there? How many were made redundant? How many were redeployed by the Commonwealth?
 4. What has been the impact of this change on ABSTUDY recipients and applicants?
 5. Can you provide information on the average length of processing time for ABSTUDY applications (1) for four years immediately before the closures and (2) since the closures?
 6. Can Indigenous students still apply for ABSTUDY through Centrelink? Are Centrelink staff provided with training to help them provide culturally-appropriate assistance and advice to Indigenous ABSTUDY applicants?
 7. With the opening of the new ICC network, will students be able to apply for ABSTUDY through ICCs? Will ICCs replace Centrelink in this regard. Or augment it?
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