

**Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Human Services Portfolio**

**Department of Human Services**

Budget Estimates 2007-08 - May 2007

**Question: HS64**

**Outcome 1, Output 1**

**Topic: Department of Human Services – Job Capacity Assessments**

**Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written Question on Notice**

**SENATOR SIEWERT asked on 24/05/2007:**

1. Can you explain the job capacity assessment process for a woman who has breast cancer and/or is receiving treatment for breast cancer?
2. What status if any does a medical certificate have in relation to a job capacity assessment?
3. Can you explain when job capacity assessments are required? For example why would someone receiving treatment for breast cancer have 3 job capacity assessments in 5 months?
4. If staff at a job network provider said to a woman with breast cancer that “three months was more than enough time to get over breast cancer” and that she should “just be getting on with it”, would this kind of behaviour meet quality assurance standards for job network providers?

**Answer:**

1. A JCA assessor will record any medical condition as evidenced by a medical certificate, treating doctor’s report or other documents at the time of assessment. The job capacity assessment will take into account the functional impact of the medical condition on the client's ability to work over the next two year period, as well as their ability to participate in suitable activities. This medical evidence may also affect assessment of the client's support requirements and whether they are referred to support services, such as employment services and community programmes. Generally, job capacity assessments are conducted face-to-face, but a phone or file assessment may be conducted if appropriate, for example due to the client’s medical condition or treatment.
2. A medical certificate or treating doctor’s report provides evidence to a JCA assessor that a permanent or temporary medical condition exists. A medical certificate must be provided by clients seeking exemption from Centrelink activity test requirements on the grounds of temporary incapacity, or ‘partial capacity to work’ status. Clients must have a medical certificate or treating doctor’s report to be referred to Vocational Rehabilitation Services or the Disability Employment Network.
3. This question should be directed to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, which has policy responsibility for referrals to job capacity assessment.
4. This question should be directed to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, which is responsible for Job Network services.