

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES – 29 MAY 2008

Human Services Portfolio



Department/Agency: Centrelink
Outcome/Output Group: Outcome 1, Output 1.1
Topic: Customers outside Australia

Senator: Coonan
Question reference number: HS51
Type of question: Written
Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 July 2008

Question:

HS51: Could you indicate the 18 countries currently involved with information sharing arrangements with our Government Agencies? Could you also indicate the further four countries which are scheduled to commence in the near future? When will these new agreements begin?

Answer:

HS51: Australia currently has bilateral Social Security Agreements with 19 countries. These agreements facilitate sharing of information between Centrelink and the Agreement partner required for the application of Social Security law in the respective countries. The current Social Security Agreement countries are Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and the USA.

The three upcoming Agreement countries are:

- Greece – 1 October 2008;
- Republic of Korea – 1 October 2008; and
- Japan – 1 January 2009 (subject to passing of legislation in both countries).

In addition to the information sharing arrangements with Australia's Social Security Agreement partners, Australia also has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in respect of data exchange with the United Kingdom (UK). Australia has not had an International Social Security Agreement with the UK since 2001, and the MOU allows a limited exchange of data in respect of mutual Age pension customers residing in Australia.

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