

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES – 28 MAY 2009**

**Human Services Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Centrelink  
**Outcome/Output Group:** Outcome 1, Output 1.1  
**Topic:** Unmet Demand

**Senator:** Scullion  
**Question reference number:** HS12  
**Type of question:** Hansard FP&A 91, 28 May 2009.  
**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 10 July 2009

**Question:**

**HS12: Senator SCULLION**—Indeed. Are you able to tell me how many calls were unanswered in that same period?

**Mr Jones**—I have given you last year's figure already.

**Mr Pratt**—Would it help, Senator, if we took this on notice?

**Senator SCULLION**—Perhaps you can get back to me; that would be fine.

**Answer:**

Centrelink measures calls unanswered by a calculation of how many call attempts were made each week that were not successful in entering Centrelink's telephony network. These call attempts represent individual phone numbers each week (both landline and mobile) and are calculated each week.

This calculation does not represent individual customers and therefore does not represent 'unanswered customer calls'. It is not possible for Centrelink to accurately calculate the number of customers who receive a busy signal across a twelve month period.

Centrelink refers to these call attempts as 'unmet demand'. For the period of 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 there were approximately 4.16 million call attempts that were not successful in entering Centrelink's telephony network. In the same period Centrelink Call handled around 33.7 million calls and for the 2008-09 financial year achieved a customer satisfaction rating of 91 per cent.

The unmet demand figure is larger than in the previous year and recognises that 2008-09 was an atypical year. During the year, Centrelink responded to government announcements for the Economic Security Strategy and Household Stimulus Package. In addition, Centrelink responded to a range of sustained emergencies including the Victorian bushfires, H1N1 Influenza and the New South Wales and Queensland floods. The combination of these events impacted significantly on call demand.

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