

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

Human Services Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Human Services
Outcome/Output Group: Outcome1/Output Group 2
Topic: CSP Staffing Numbers

Senator: Scullion

Question reference number: HS4

Type of question: Hansard F&PA 67-68, 28 May 2009

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 July 2009

Question:

HS4: Senator SCULLION—would you be able to give me, on notice, any sort of breakdown within areas? Do you have certain areas within CSA? I understand what you said about people being flexible enough in and outside of jobs. Someone might be, say, a phone operator but they are involved in a range of things— counselling and the compliance end of things; I acknowledge that. Do you have categories? I am just trying to set some benchmarks so we can see where the work is needed in the future. Do you have categories of employment—where these extra staff would be going? Would you be able to provide that on notice?

...I do appreciate that within the one department that may be a bit difficult. Given that we have had some changes about the reporting, I would like to go back to having some benchmarks that make it easy for everyone to make some comparisons and to understand some of the trends. Over that period of time we had a big injection of staff. If you can provide for me a breakdown in a general—it might only be two or three areas; I am not sure. I know how difficult that can sometimes be. I have no real understanding myself of areas within your department. I would like an understanding of what the sorts of staffing levels would be in one department next to another. I am not sure whether you can break that down. If there is a natural breakdown—how people would see themselves operating— then I would appreciate getting information on that.

Ms Williams—we will see what we can do and get back to you.

Answer:

HS4: The Department of Human Services (DHS) staff working directly on the Child Support Program (CSP), excluding the Department's overall support functions such as ICT, HR and Finance, are broadly separated into three functional groups to meet particular customer service needs.

The staffing levels, as at 11 June 2009 and expressed as full time equivalents, were as follows:

	Ongoing	Non Ongoing	Total
Frontline Customer Services	1,861	19	1,880
Enforcement Services	568	13	581
Business Support	723	8	731
Total	3,152	40	3,192

The 2009-10 Budget provided DHS with extra resources that will support the maintenance of customer service standards and the prevention of debt growth beyond 2008-09 levels noting that debt collection occurs across all service delivery areas of the CSP.

DHS is currently finalising its internal budget allocation for 2009-10, noting that the detailed allocation in any year depends on emerging priorities.

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