

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and agencies

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2005-2006, 1 November 2005

Question: HS14

Outcome #1, Output #2

Topic: Child Support Agency – Centrelink/CSA phone transfer pilot

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: F&PA 109-110

SENATOR MOORE asked 1/11/05:

Senator MOORE—Have you got documentation on that pilot project—where it is being done and that kind of basic data?

Ms Bird—I do not have it with me, but we do have some documentation about that.

Senator MOORE—Is that something that we can have, Ms Scott?

Ms Bird—It can now cover all of our clients. We have extended it to the general pool of clients.

Senator MOORE—Can we have information on that pilot, Ms Scott? I do not think we have heard of that one before.

Ms Scott—We do have a little in the achievements document.

Senator MOORE—I knew you were going to say that.

Ms Scott—I would be comfortable to take that question on notice, and then we can provide you with more information.

Senator MOORE—This particular case has stimulated the questions. It seems like this is an attempt which the department is making to look at that. We would like to get some data on the pilot as to how it is going, what the uptake is and that kind of thing.

Mr Miller—We can provide a briefing or some data for you on that.

Answer:

Some parents can experience a level of confusion about the interaction between their child support case and family tax benefit entitlement.

To improve the service to our mutual customers in these cases, CSA and Centrelink commenced a joint initiative on 1 June 2005 to offer parents the option of a telephone transfer directly to a customer service officer in the other agency.

Upon identifying that information provided by the parent may impact on an assessment/payments administered by the other agency, the customer service officer can introduce the customer and explain the issues to a person in the other agency.

Once the other agency understands what the issues are, the first agency drops off the telephone call.

Since June 2005 approximately 3,300 parents have taken up the offer of a transfer to Centrelink from CSA. CSA staff have transferred approximately 5,700 parents to Centrelink where a family tax benefit issue is identified.

The service has been extended to a broader range of customers from November 2005.

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These transfers increase the opportunities to connect parents to the appropriate services without the need for the customer to make separate telephone calls. This service should assist in resolving some of the issues parents have around the child support/family assistance interaction.