

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: HS 65

Outcome 1, Output 1.1

Topic: Centrelink – Youth Allowance – Unreasonable To Live At Home

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR WONG asked the Minister for Human Services, upon written notice:

1. Can we have the number of ‘unreasonable to live at home’ claims for Youth Allowance, and the numbers rejected in the year 2004-2005?
2. Could we get a breakdown of the time taken to process these claims?
3. Of the claims that were rejected can we have data on the numbers that were appealed to the Original Decision Maker, The Authorised Review officer, the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and The Administrative Appeals Tribunal, and the outcome of the appeal?
4. How many of these claims were withdrawn?
5. What is the percentage of Social Work time taken up in assessing these claims?

Answer:

1. There were 47,847 claims for Youth Allowance on the grounds of it being unreasonable to live at home in 2004-05. Of these, 16,257 were rejected.¹
2. The timeliness standard for Youth Allowance claims in general is 70 per cent of claims within 21 days. There is no specific timeliness standard for ‘unreasonable to live at home’ claims in recognition of the complexity of the cases being assessed. The time taken to process claims can vary considerably depending on factors such as family circumstances and the availability of parents and third parties. In some cases the assessment may be prolonged as the family may be referred to a mediation service such as Reconnect as part of the assessment. Every effort is made to complete the assessment process within 21 days.

¹ Taken from the Social Work Information System (SWIS).

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3. Appeals with regard to Unreasonable to Live at Home cases in 2004-05 are set out in the table below.

		Affirmed	Set aside	Varied	Withdrawn	Dismissed	No jurisdiction
ODM	Reasonable to live at home	107	43	5			
	Not Independent	393	200	23	8		
	Supported by Parent/guardian	88	39	18	2		
ARO	Reasonable to live at home	36	6	1			
	Not Independent	155	26	11	9		
	Supported by Parent/guardian	13	4	2	3		1
SSAT	Reasonable to live at home	2			1		
	Not Independent	14	10		3	3	
	Supported by Parent/guardian	2					
AAT	Reasonable to live at home						
	Not Independent	1			1	1	
	Supported by Parent/guardian						

NB. The 'reasonable to live at home' category contains all 'reasonable to live at home' cases. However, the two other categories (not independent and supported) may also contain 'reasonable to live at home' cases. This is because the law states a Youth Allowance customer who cannot live at home is regarded as independent. Therefore, some 'reasonable to live at home' cases would have been coded as 'not independent' or 'supported'. The 'supported by parent/guardian' category is also included because 'reasonable to live at home' cases would also have been coded using this reason.

4. In 2004-05, there were 3,288 claims for Youth Allowance on the grounds of it being unreasonable to live at home that were withdrawn.
5. Unreasonable To Live At Home assessments constitute 23.7 per cent of overall referrals to the Social Work service for 2004-05. These assessments are more time consuming than other Social Work activities. As such they make up a much larger proportion of Social Work workload.