

Estimates 2006-07 — Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2006

Questions on Notice Index—Department of Human Services and agencies

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS1	DHS	MOORE	F&PA 118	<p>Ms Scott—Yes. One question taken on notice took 21 hours to prepare an answer for, at a total cost of \$1,220.</p> <p>Senator MOORE—Can you table that piece of paper? It would be useful.</p> <p>Ms Scott—I will take it on notice. I have some additional information, which I am happy to go through, about House of Representatives questions and Senate questions on notice, but they are all the same sort of thing.</p>	Answer received 15/12/06
HS2	DHS	WONG	F&PA 119	<p>Senator WONG—Ms Scott, of the 56 per cent which were received late, when were those answers provided to the minister's office for approval? I presume you will want to take that on notice.</p>	Answer received 14/12/06
HS3	DHS	WONG	F&PA 123	<p>Senator WONG—So what is the sanction or the penalty?</p> <p>Mr Dolan—Under the contract we have a range of sanctions available, depending upon the severity of the case.</p> <p>Senator WONG—Perhaps you could on notice provide us—</p>	Answer received 15/12/06
HS4	DHS	WONG	F&PA 123	<p>Senator WONG—I will be up-front with you. We understand that, for example, in Ceduna there has been some concern raised about JCAs being conducted in relation to people who reside in Ceduna because the cost of the flight in fact exceeds the contractual fee for the JCA.</p> <p>Mr Dolan—I would have to take that question on notice and follow up with the providers. No-one has raised that issue with me.</p>	Answer received 13/02/07
HS5	DHS	WONG	F&PA 124	<p>Mr Dolan—Yes. There would have been amendments. But that would have been in the tender. There may have been some detailed modifications, but the substance should be there.</p> <p>Senator WONG—Perhaps let's not hypothesise. I would appreciate it if you could give me the up-to-date version.</p> <p>Mr Dolan—We can give you an updated version.</p> <p>Senator WONG—That would be great. Thank you.</p>	Answer received 15/12/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS6	DHS	WONG	F&PA 124	<p>Senator WONG—How many JCAs have resulted in a finding that someone has only a temporary condition? Do you track that?</p> <p>Mr Dolan—I would have to take that question on notice. I do not have that information with me.</p>	Answer received 14/12/06
HS7	DHS	WONG	F&PA 125	<p>Senator WONG—I am not asking that. I am not asking about the determination of which income support payment they are going on to. I am asking whether you track the conditions that are assessed as a result of the JCA.</p> <p>Mr Dolan—We will take that on notice.</p>	Answer received 14/12/06
HS8	CENTRELINK	WONG	F&PA 127	<p>Mr Whalan—There actually were two separate work orders. There were three all up. This is the first of two work orders within that \$75,000 figure. It is approximately \$75,000.</p> <p>Senator WONG—Is the second work order identified in the annual report?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—I do not believe so. I will need to confirm for you the date of the second work order.</p> <p>Senator WONG—I understand what you were disclosing here, though, is not payment; it is the value of contracts let in that financial year. So either \$75,000 should have been disclosed or two lots of \$38,720 and then the remainder, which is \$32,000, should have been disclosed.</p> <p>Mr Whalan—I will need to confirm that for you.</p>	Answer received 15/12/06
HS9	CENTRELINK	WONG	F&PA 127	<p>Mr Whalan—Just a moment. The answer is yes. I am just going to find you the details. Some 60 non-government organisations have been placed onto the financial case management register and are operating with us and available for us to refer individual cases to in respect of financial case management.</p> <p>Senator WONG—Can you provide the list of those 60 on notice?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—I will take that on notice.</p>	Answer received 13/02/07

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS10	CENTRELINK	WONG	F&PA 129	<p>Senator WONG—So 4,156 is the total. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Would the \$35,000 be against the departmental outputs? I am reading off page 81. What is the expenditure to date on departmental output for that line item? That is perhaps an easier way to look at it.</p> <p>Mr Whalan—On departmental outputs? We will take that on notice.</p> <p>Mr Whalan—The estimated expenditure for the year to date until yesterday is \$85,149.</p> <p>Senator WONG—You might want to confirm that on notice. You understand what I am looking at?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—Yes, I will.</p>	Answer received 9/2/07
HS11	CENTRELINK	WONG	F&PA 129	<p>Senator WONG—Yes. Can you tell me on what basis the additional staff hours were calculated? You might want to take it on notice.</p> <p>Mr Whalan—I think we will.</p>	Answer received 9/2/07
HS12	CENTRELINK	WONG	F&PA 130	<p>Senator WONG—Can you give me national figures of the proportion of Newstart and Youth Allowance customers who are currently under fortnightly lodgement or fortnightly engagement?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—We can, but we will also take it on notice.</p>	Answer received 15/12/06
HS13	CENTRELINK	WONG	F&PA 130	<p>Senator WONG—How many additional staff hours per fortnight are estimated to be required in order to achieve that?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—We will take that on notice.</p>	Answer received 12/02/07
HS14	CENTRELINK	WONG	F&PA 131	<p>Senator WONG—Finally, can you give me an indication, perhaps on notice, of who falls outside the 90 per cent? Who are the 10 per cent who will not be appropriate for fortnightly contact?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—I will take that on notice.</p>	Answer received 14/12/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS15	CENTRELINK	WONG	F&PA 131	<p>Senator WONG—I will ask for another question to be taken on notice because we are out of time. It concerns the expanded employment entry payment on page 67 of the additional estimates data.</p> <p>Mr Whalan—I expect that will be a DEWR question.</p> <p>Senator WONG—It is in Centrelink.</p> <p>Ms Ritchie—In additional estimates?</p> <p>Senator WONG—It is on page 67. Is this to be taken off your budget and given to DEWR?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—Can I confirm I am looking at the same document.</p> <p>Senator WONG—It is the 2005-06 additional estimates statement. I am not sure it is picked up in detail in the subsequent PBS.</p> <p>Mr Whalan—Can we take it on notice—unless it turns out to be an issue for DEWR rather than Centrelink? We will inform you if that is the case.</p>	Answer received 14/12/06
HS16	CENTRELINK	SIEWERT	F&PA 132	<p>Mr Whalan—As at 29 September, 1,921 job seekers had an eight-week non-payment period applied.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT—Is it possible to break down those figures into regions or states?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—We can do it by what we call 'area'. We will take that on notice.</p>	Answer received 15/12/06
HS17	CENTRELINK	SIEWERT	F&PA 132	<p>Senator SIEWERT—Is it possible to tell me how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been breached? Do you break down those figures?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—We would be able to give you a global number. We will take that on notice. I do not know whether we would go beyond that.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT—Can we now go back to the issue of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. If you can provide that data on global reductions, can you also provide, if possible, the number per area?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—I will take that on notice.</p>	Answer received 15/12/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS18	CENTRELINK	SIEWERT	F&PA 132	<p>Senator SIEWERT—Can you break it down into the eight-week non-payment period? Are you able to provide those figures and separate those figures?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—I would like to be clear about what you would like.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT—The figure you gave me of 11,000 per month is all the rate reductions, isn't it?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—I will take that on notice.</p>	Answer received 15/12/06
HS19	CENTRELINK	SIEWERT	F&PA 132 & 133	<p>Senator SIEWERT—Is it possible to get figures for the number of people who have applied since 1 July and, if so, how many of those people have been assessed to go on the DSP and how many people have been assessed to go on Newstart?</p> <p>Mr Conn—I will also take that on notice.</p>	Answer received 9/2/07
HS20	CENTRELINK	SIEWERT	F&PA 133	<p>Senator SIEWERT—Do you have the figures for the number of people, who, in the last quarter have been reviewed, prior to May 2005, and do you know whether they have stayed on the pension or whether they have been moved on to Newstart?</p> <p>Mr Conn—I would have to take that on notice, but I believe I could provide that to you.</p>	Answer received 12/02/07
HS21	CENTRELINK	SIEWERT	F&PA 133	<p>Mr Whalan—The people who are offered financial case management are those who are considered to be vulnerable. Principally, it is those people who have dependent children. There are some other categories as well, but it is principally those who have dependent children or dependants, most of whom are children.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT—When you provide me with the list of the number of people in particular areas, can you also provide the breakdown of people and whether they have got dependent children?</p>	Answer received 15/12/06
HS22	CENTRELINK	SIEWERT	F&PA 134	<p>Senator SIEWERT—I know you will have to take this on notice. Of the 82 who have accepted, could you also tell me, if it is possible, how many are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?</p> <p>Mr Whalan—We will take that on notice.</p>	Answered 29/11/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS23	DHS	MOORE	F&PA 137	<p>Ms Scott—Would you like an indication of the number of people under each of those headings—is that what you are after?</p> <p>Senator MOORE—Yes. I take it this is the structure of the units. This is not a body per box?</p> <p>Ms Hartland—That is correct. That is right. It is the senior structure.</p> <p>Senator MOORE—So under ‘requirement’ and ‘implementation’, it is branches. Can you just give that to us on notice with how many bodies.</p> <p>Ms Hartland—Sure.</p>	Answer received 15/12/06
HS24	DHS	CAROL BROWN	F&PA 138	<p>Senator CAROL BROWN—Those recommendations that were put forward were not even fed into Professor Fels’s work in the consumer and privacy work that he is doing?</p> <p>Ms Scott—I am happy to take it on notice. It is a case where I would have to second-guess Professor Fels’s thinking, and I do not think that would be a good idea.</p>	Answer received 15/12/06
HS25	CSA	EVANS	Written	Attached	Answer received 14/12/06
HS26	CSA	EVANS	Written	Attached	Answer received 13/02/07
HS27	MEDICARE	EVANS	Written	Attached	Answer received 12/02/07
HS28	CENTRELINK	EVANS	Written	Attached	Answer received 14/12/06
HS29	CENTRELINK	EVANS	Written	Attached	Answer received 15/12/06
HS30	CENTRELINK	EVANS	Written	Attached	Answer received 13/02/07
HS31	CENTRELINK	EVANS	Written	Attached	Part 1 transferred to FACSIA 28/11/06 Answer received 12/02/07
HS32	CENTRELINK	EVANS	Written	Attached	Answer received 12/02/07
HS33	CENTRELINK	EVANS	Written	Attached	Answer received 9/2/07

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS34	CENTRELINK	EVANS	Written	Attached	Answer received 12/02/07
HS35	DHS	EVANS	Written	Attached	Answer received 12/02/07
HS36	DHS	STOTT-DESPOJA	Written	Attached	Answer received 13/02/07
HS37	DHS	STOTT-DESPOJA	Written	Attached	Answer received 13/02/07
HS38	DHS	SIEWERT	Written	Attached	Transferred to DEWR 22/11/06
HS39	DHS	SIEWERT	Written	Attached	Parts 3,4,5 and 8 transferred to DEWR 22/11/06 Answer received 12/02/07
HS40	DHS	WONG	Written	Attached	Parts 5, 6, 7 and 13 transferred to DEWR 22/11/06 Answer received 12/02/07
HS41	CENTRELINK	WONG	Written	Attached	Answer received 13/02/07
HS42	CENTRELINK	WONG	Written	Attached	Parts 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 transferred to DEWR 22/11/06 Answer received 14/12/06
HS43	DHS	WONG	Written	Attached	Answer received 15/12/06
HS44	DHS	WONG	Written	Attached	Answer received 9/2/07
HS45	DHS	WONG	Written	Attached	Answer received 14/12/06
HS46	DHS	WONG	Written	Attached	Answer received 14/12/06
HS47	MEDICARE	MCLUCAS	Written	Attached	Answer received 13/02/07

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS48	CSA	EVANS	Written	Attached	Transferred from Community Affairs Answer received 15/12/06
HS49	DHS	LUDWIG	Written	Attached	Answer received 15/12/06
HS50	DHS	LUDWIG	Written	Attached	Answer received 12/02/07
HS51	DHS	LUDWIG	Written	Attached	Answer received 12/02/07
HS52	CRS	LUDWIG	Written	Attached	Answer received 9/2/07
HS53	CSA	LUDWIG	Written	Attached	Answer received 9/2/07
HS54	CENTRELINK	LUDWIG	Written	Attached	Answer received 9/2/07
HS55	MEDICARE	LUDWIG	Written	Attached	Answer received 9/2/07
HS56	AUSTRALIAN HEARING	LUDWIG	Written	Attached	Answer received 15/12/06
HS57	HAS	LUDWIG	Written	Attached	Answered 29/11/06
HS58	CSA	EVANS	Written	Attached	Transferred from Community Affairs Answer received 15/12/06
HS59	CENTRELINK	WONG	Written	Attached	Transferred from DEWR Amended 31/01/07 Answer received 12/02/07
HS60	CENTRELINK	WONG	Written	Attached	Transferred from DEWR Returned to DEWR 22/01/07
HS61	CENTRELINK	WONG	Written	Attached	Transferred from DEWR Answer received 9/2/07

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
HS62	CENTRELINK	WONG	Written	Attached	Transferred from DEWR Answer received 13/02/07

Please note that answers HS 1 – HS 48 and HS 58 are due by 15 December 2006.

Answers HS 49 – HS 57 are due by 31 January 2007.

Answers HS 59 – 61 are due by 12 January 2007.

Written QON

HS 25

1. Regarding CSA's use of Crosby Textor for various consultancies, please provide a table which highlights the dates, purpose of each contract, the cost of each contract, the method used to select Crosby Textor (i.e directly sourced) and the justification for using Crosby Textor from 96/97 financial year to current.

HS 26

- 1 How many staff members are currently acting on higher duties across each CSA site?
- 2 How many staff members across all CSA sites have been appointed to positions temporarily or on higher duties, without a recruitment processing being conducted from 2005/2006?
- 3 Have any SES officers been recruited since 28 February 2006? What level and in what roles?
- 4 Have any SES officers been appointed to their roles without an employment process being conducted/advertised?
- 5 Are you aware of any cases where CSA employees have been intimidated, threatened or disadvantaged (Such as through promotion opportunities) for being a member of any political party, or had their roles/positions redefined due to their membership of a political party or been moved to a different position/location in the CSA structure due to their membership of a political party?

HS 27

Provider number backlog

1. Where are decisions about the issuance of individual Medicare provider numbers made? Please provide detailed examples?
2. How many applications does Medicare Australia receive for Medicare provider numbers a month?
3. How many of these are for GPs?
4. What proportion of these applications are made on-line?
5. What is the current period that doctors in each state and territory must wait to receive a new Medicare Provider number?
6. What is the longest time that doctors are currently waiting for a provider number? Please provide details?
7. Is there a difference in approval times for written vs on-line applications?
8. How many staff (please list per office and provide office address) are allocated to the approval and issuance of provider numbers?
9. How many requests for provider numbers each month are for doctors who are looking to work in rural and remote areas (RRMAs 4-7)? Please provide details relating to areas?
10. How many requests for provider numbers each month are for doctors looking to work in Areas of Need? Please provide details relating to areas?
11. How many requests for provider numbers each month are for newly arrived overseas trained doctors?
12. Please provide a list of the number of staff assigned to this role and the average waiting time for a provider number for each year (or financial year) since 2000.
13. With the ability of psychologists to now access Medicare services, will these psychologists need a provider number? How many staff have been assigned to do this? Are these staff additional to existing staff?
14. How many GP provider numbers are currently operative and how many GPs hold these numbers?
15. Does the Department have a procedure for withdrawing inoperative provider numbers? Provide details of withdrawn provider numbers, per year since 2000?
16. What is the Department doing to respond to the call by the Federal Government's Regulation Task Force for the current multi-provider number system to be scrapped and for doctors to be given a single provider number?

Regarding the covert optical surveillance used by Centrelink on behalf of the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (see answer to question on notice 166, Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Portfolio, Budget Estimates, May-June 2006):

1. What payment recipients are covert optical surveillance methods used on?
2. Provide details of the methods used, i.e. video camera or still camera, etc
3. Separately for the years 2004-05 and 2005-06 how many people in receipt of the Age pension were the subject of covert optical surveillance?
4. In 2005-06 how many people in receipt of the Carers payment were the subject of covert optical surveillance?
5. In 2005-06 how many people in receipt of Newstart were the subject of covert optical surveillance?
6. In 2005-06 how many people in receipt of the sole parent payment were the subject of covert optical surveillance?
7. In 2005-06 how many people in receipt of the parent payment partnered were the subject of covert optical surveillance?
8. In 2005-06 how many people in receipt of the Disability Support Payment were the subject of covert optical surveillance?
9. Separately for the years 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 indicate how many people have been the subject of covert optical surveillance?
10. Separately for the years 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 indicate how many cases of fraud were detected through the use of covert optical surveillance?
11. Which firms have been contracted to do the surveillance? In 2005-06 how much was spent in total on this type of activity?

HS 29

1. Please provide data on Centrelink customers who receive social security payments from Australia and payments from countries that Australia has a Social Security Agreement with, including:
 - a. number of customers who receive dual payments
 - b. breakdown on dual payments by country
2. In the last 12 months, how many cases have there been of alleged overpayments of dual pension/payment recipients? Please provide:
 - a. number of customers affected by over-payments
 - b. breakdown by country
 - c. total amount of alleged overpayments
3. Can the information for question 2 be provided for each federal electorate?\

4. Does Centrelink monitor the amount paid for social security payments from countries that Australia has a Social Security Agreement with? If so please provide details. If not, why not?
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HS 30

1. Please provide figures on the number of Carer Payment (child) claims, grants and rejections for each of the last two financial years
 2. How many parents have been granted Carer Payment (child) under the criteria that was announced during the lead up to the Welfare to Work changes?
 3. Could we have the number of debts raised in 2005-06, by payment type and the total amount for Carer Payment and Carer Allowance?
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HS 31

1. How many age and disability pensioners does the Government anticipate
 - a. lose all payments and
 - b. have their payment reducedby the 2006 Budget measure to increase the number of reviews of non home real estate asset values?
 2. Please provide update to question on notice HS32 from the November 2005 Senate Estimates on real estate holdings?
 3. Please provide update to answer HS 65 question on notice during the November 2005 Senate Estimates regarding Unreasonable to Live at Home Assessments for Youth Allowance for 2005-06?
 4. Please provide update of HS45 regarding Indigenous appeals (including appeals to the Original Decision Maker) from the November 2005 Senate Estimates?
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HS 32

1. Please provide figures on the number of people convicted for Social Security fraud for multiple claims, including breakdown by number, the actual number of multiple claims made, per individual, for 2005-06.
2. Please provide a breakdown of data showing prosecution activity for 2005-06, by payment type, number of convictions and amount involved, by State and Territory.
3. How many people have been convicted in each State and Territory, for 2005-06?
4. How many people have been considered for prosecution activity by Centrelink, but not referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, by State and Territory, for 2005-06?
5. How many people have been pursued for Social Security fraud by the Director of Public Prosecutions and found not guilty?

6. Please provide the numbers of people prosecuted for Social Security fraud who had legal representation, and the type of representation, for 2005-06?
 7. How many of those who were prosecuted for Social Security fraud were represented by private solicitors were not convicted by the Director of Public Prosecutions?
 8. How many of those who were prosecuted for Social Security fraud in 2005-06 had representations put to the Director of Public Prosecutions that it was not in the public interest to prosecute?
 9. In how many cases referred to the DPP in 2005-06 for Social Security fraud did the DPP decide not to proceed with the prosecution?
 10. Please update all the tables provided in response to question on notice HS36 from the November 2005 Estimates for the 2005-06 financial year.
 11. Please provide an update for the 2005-06 financial year of the figures provided on table 4 on page 44 of the Centrelink 2004-05 Annual Report.
 12. Please provide a table showing a full breakdown (by payment type and value of debts raised) of all debts raised in 2005-06.
 13. What is the total value of debts that have been recovered (by payment type) in the 2005-06 financial year?
 14. How much Centrelink debt has been recovered by i) Dunn & Bradstreet and ii) R&C Mercantile in 2005-06?
 15. How many debts has been recovered by i) Dunn & Bradstreet and ii) R&C Mercantile in 2005-06 by credit card and what is the dollar value of the debts recovered by credit card, in 2005-06?
 16. Please provide figures on the number of Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance incapacitated exemptions that were sought in 2005-06, and final number granted?
 17. Could we have a list of the range of information is held on the Social Work Information System database?
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HS 33

1. Please provide a breakdown of the Job capacity Assessors, by main allied health qualification (e.g. occupational therapist, psychologist, etc) by years of practical experience in their current profession?
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HS 34

1. Can Centrelink confirm that AWAs are currently being offered to workers in CSCs and AOs?
2. Can Centrelink confirm that AWAs are planned to be offered to all workers in the Call Centre network?

3. Can Centrelink confirm that AWAs are being offered as a condition of employment for graduate recruits in NSO?
4. Can Centrelink confirm that AWAs are being offered to existing employees in NSO?
5. How many employees APS6 and below have voluntarily taken up AWAs since Workchoices was introduced?
6. What is Centrelinks national target/quota for new employees to be covered by AWAs?
7. Has Centrelink set AWA take-up targets/ quotas for its existing staff? If yes, please provide details of the targets/ quotas for each Centrelink region?
8. Has Centrelink identified regions that are failing to meet their AWA take up target? If yes, which regions?
9. What is Centrelinks strategy or proposed strategy to assist regions to meet their AWA take-up target?
10. What is Centrelinks national budget allocation for developing, promoting and administrating AWAs?
11. How much has Centrelink spent this financial year on offering money for sign on bonuses for AWAs, regional trips of Senior Managers promoting AWAs to employees through compulsory all-staff meetings, and employing AWA Account Managers to administer AWAs?
12. Is Centrelink aware of any Centrelink Managers or Staff receiving and/ or being offered financial incentives to transfer existing staff onto AWAs? If yes, please detail. If no, is this action being considered by Centrelink for the future?
13. What is the budget allocated to promoting AWAs in:
 14. Each regional area for eg. Area Hunter NSW;
 15. Call Centres;
 16. Graduates in NSO?
17. Where does Centrelink anticipate the savings to come from to fund this budgetary expenditure?
18. What is Centrelinks timeframe for rolling out AWAs to meet targets?
19. Does Centrelink support 'choice' for all employees and potential employees on whether they sign an AWA or elect to be covered by the existing Certified Agreement? If not, why not?
20. Does Centrelink support 'choice' for all employees to elect to be covered by the Certified Agreement at the expiry of their AWA? If not, why not?
21. Does Centrelink support the choice for employees to align the expiry of their AWA with the expiry of the Certified Agreement? If not, why not?
22. Will Centrelink guarantee that no Centrelink worker will be worse off under an AWA than the Certified Agreement? If not, why not?
23. Does Centrelink plan to increase its opening hours in any of its Offices? If yes, provide details.

24. Will Centrelink open on Saturdays this financial year? If yes, provide details.
 25. Are the AWAs Centrelink are offering to all existing employees APS6 and below the same in terms and conditions? If no, provide details.
 26. What clauses in the template AWA for APS6 and below are negotiable?
 27. What clauses in the template AWA for APS6 and below are not negotiable? Provide reasons why.
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HS 35

1. Will smartcard numbers be afforded the legal protections, pertaining to their usage, that currently protect Australian Tax File Numbers?
 2. Will the smartcard operate according to the international standard ISO 24727 operating system? Has the use of ISO 24727 been ruled out?
 3. Will the smartcard operate according to a proprietary operating system? If so, will it be Microsoft?
 4. Has the use of a proprietary operating system been ruled out?
 5. Is the use of a Microsoft proprietary operating system being considered?
 6. Will publicly accessible smartcard readers be made available for Australians to see what is recorded on their card? Has this service been budgeted?
 7. Will smartcard contracts include 'shared returns' features, ie. where contractors / consultants share financial returns in order to align their interests with public interests?
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HS 36

1. What evidence is there that Australians currently lack any 'access' to health benefits or social services because of the absence of an access card?
2. Who will be able to access information from the card? What type of information can be accessed?
3. Who will be able to access information from the national population database?

4. The Government claims there will be time savings of 3.5 minutes for each of the face-to-face interactions each year. Are these time estimates based on demonstrated experience in application of smartcard technologies. What percentage of the time lost, is based on people presenting with wrong or incomplete documents?
5. The KPMG Report says that “fraud savings could range from at least \$1.6 billion to \$3 billion over a ten year period” (KPMG Report p.12). What are the details of where those savings will come from?
6. Where there is a pre-existing commitment to delivering on-the-spot Medicare refunds at the point of the health service, why is an access card necessary to deliver the same ‘efficiency’ benefit?

HS 37

1. Why is the introduction of the Access Card proceeding before either a review of the adequacy of the national privacy laws, or the national Smartcard framework is finished?
2. Are there any updates on whether the Government will release the privacy advice it commissioned on this proposal?
3. Will data be deleted if someone opts out of having the card?
4. With the prospect of sensitive health information being stored in the ‘public’ area of the chip, can that information be ‘captured’ electronically without the permission of cardholders? How can such type of unauthorised ‘capture’ be prevented?
5. How will the proposed biometric facial recognition technology work if there is a case of identity theft?
6. What is the estimated risk of increasing identity theft if this proposal for increasing ‘customer convenience’ by pre-populating forms is introduced?

7. Are there any updates on whether facial recognition technology be used to match people photographed on CCTV cameras, to identify them from the centralised database? In what circumstances, if any, will this be allowed?
 8. The Australian Taxation Office and a leading criminologist predict that an outcome of introduction of the card will be an increase in identity theft. What is the estimated dollar value of the new identity fraud and identity theft likely to be generated by this project?
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HS 38

According to the FACSIA website

A person can be considered to be unemployed for NSA purposes even if they are doing sufficient work (1.1.S.403) to fully meet their participation requirement and consequently have no job search requirement.

The majority of NSA recipients whose work would be considered sufficient to fully meet their participation requirements would be people with a part-time requirement. *However, in some circumstances, full-time work might also be considered sufficient and the person remain qualified for payment. The most common examples of full-time workers who might qualify for NSA without further activity requirements are:*

an NSA recipient/claimant with a pensioner partner (the income test for these couples results in a cut-out point for NSA which is considerably higher than applies to individuals in couples where both receive a social security benefit such as NSA),

long-term single NSA recipients aged 60 or more who receive rent assistance (the cut-out point for such cases can also exceed full-time minimum wages).

1. The site says that 'the most common examples' of full time workers are those I just described, what other categories of full time employees would be eligible for NSA?
 2. How many full time employees are currently eligible for NSA?
 3. If the minimum wage does not keep pace with the indexation of NSA then the number of full time employees eligible for NSA will rise won't it?
 4. What are the next categories that this would apply to?
-

HS 39

There are examples on your website that explain to people what may happen to them if they are paid below the minimum wage

Example: Julie has a 15 hour per week requirement as she is a principal carer of a child under 16. She works for 20 hours a week at her parent's shop. They pay her \$10 an hour: she earns \$200 a week. The applicable hourly rate for Julie is the Federal Minimum Wage of \$12.75 an hour. This means she will satisfy the sufficient work test if she earns at least \$191.25 (i.e. 15 hours at \$12.75). As Julie's earnings exceed this requirement, and she is working at least 15 hours, the sufficient work test is satisfied.

Example: Cid is undertaking 10 hours a week approved voluntary work. To reach the additional 5 hours required he has taken a part-time job one day a week for 5 hours with a friend's business. He is paid \$10 an hour. This will not satisfy the sufficient work test as the remuneration is insufficient - he needs to earn at least \$63.75 (i.e. 5 hours at the Federal Minimum Wage rate of \$12.75 an hour). He increases the work to 10 hours a week. This is more than the required number of hours, and as his pay now exceeds \$63.75, the remuneration test is satisfied. Cid is now meeting his 15 hours activity test obligations in full.

1. Does Centrelink think the site should clearly inform people that it is illegal to be paid below the minimum wage?
2. How many individuals have informed Centrelink that they have been paid below the minimum wage?
3. If individuals aren't breached for not meeting the remuneration level, how does Centrelink deal with them?
4. What happens if individuals don't want to increase their hours to meet the remuneration level but continue to meet their activity level?
5. How many employers who appear to be paying below the minimum wage have been reported to the office of the workplace services or other regulatory bodies?
6. Does Centrelink believe that individuals are deliberately under declaring their hourly rate of pay? If so, on what evidence do you base this belief?
7. Does Centrelink have a data matching process in place to automatically alert these regulators about employers who are breaking the law by paying below the minimum wage?
8. Is there a process in place to inform any individual who appears to be being paid below the minimum wage what their rights are?

HS 40

- 1) By 30 September, how many Job Capacity Assessments (JCAs) had been:
 - a) submitted?
 - b) finalised?

- 2) What are the numbers of “did not attends” to date, broken down by state and territory, and as a percentage of appointments?
- 3) How many JCAs were submitted for:
 - a) people seeking an activity test exemption on the grounds of medical incapacity?
 - b) new Disability Support Pension (DSP) claimants?
 - c) existing DSP claimants subject to a medical or work capacity review?
 - d) people identified through the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) as having severe or multiple barriers to employment?
- 4) How many JCAs have been finalised for:
 - a) people seeking an activity test exemption on the grounds of medical incapacity?
 - b) new Disability Support Pension (DSP) claimants?
 - c) existing DSP claimants subject to a medical or work capacity review?
 - d) people identified through the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) as having severe or multiple barriers to employment?
- 5) For those JCAs that have been finalised seeking an activity test exemption on the grounds of medical incapacity, how many have been upheld?
- 6) For those JCAs that have been finalised for new claims to the DSP, how many have been upheld? For those people that were assessed as ineligible for DSP, what other payments have they been assessed as eligible for instead?
- 7) Of those finalised JCAs that involved reviewing existing DSP recipients, how many people were assessed as eligible to continue to receive the DSP? For those people that were assessed as ineligible for DSP, what other payments have they been assessed as eligible for instead?
- 8) For those JCAs that have been finalised for people with severe or multiple barriers, what payments have people been recommended to receive?
- 9) Of all JCAs that have been finalised, how many recommended a referral to:
 - a) Job Network?
 - b) Disability Employment Network?
 - c) Vocational Rehabilitation Services?
 - d) Personal Support Program?
 - e) Job Placement, Education and Training?
 - f) other services?
- 10) What is the average time taken to complete the assessments? How many completed on 2, 4 and 4 or more weeks?
- 11) How many reports have been re-submitted?
- 12) How many JCA's done by telephone or on the papers?
- 13) What is the average time between referral by a Job Capacity Assessment to, and commencement in:
 - a) Job Network?
 - b) Disability Employment Network?

- c) Vocational Rehabilitation Services?
- d) Personal Support Program?
- e) Job Placement, Education and Training?
- f) other services?

14) For those people who were not referred to an employment service, what was the reason for non-referral?

15) How many specialists' reports have requested so far?

HS 41

- 1) Since 1 July 2006, how many occasions has the Job Capacity Account been accessed by Job Capacity assessors? What is the total amount of expenditure to date under the Job Capacity Account?
- 2) Can DEWR/Department of Human Services please provide a full list of the approved interventions that can be purchased under the Job Capacity Account? Of services purchased using the Job Capacity Account to date, what is the number and proportion of each of the approved interventions that has been purchased? What is the average expenditure for each of the approved interventions?
- 3) Why is the Job Capacity Account only available for people who have been referred to Job Network? What services are available for people who are referred to other employment services?
- 4) Can you explain what happens after a JCA is completed, if other issues are raised, for example abuse that led to a depressive illness that had not been addressed, how are the job seekers on-going needs for support met? How does the Department address duty of care issues that may arise with JCA's?
- 5) Do the JCA guidelines require that the service provider contact and discuss with the jobseekers treating physician or caseworker or support worker, whether the specific intervention proposed would be useful, beneficial, or even harmful?
- 6) Can you explain where the idea of this type of intervention came from and what studies indicate that it is a useful type of intervention, and what evidence that you have from overseas about the success of this approach to getting people quickly back into work?

HS 42

- 1) How does DEWR respond to a situation where someone is referred to PSP by a JCA, but cannot access PSP because there is a waitlist in their area? For example, is this person still required to meet activity test requirements? Are they required to participate in other employment services?
- 2) How many Personal Support Program (PSP) participants who have exited the program with a social outcome have had a new JCA assessment?
- 3) What has been the outcome of these assessments in relation to where participants have been placed?

- 4) What systems are in place for Job Capacity Assessors to view the PSP exit report as EA2000 does not interface with EA3000?
 - 5) Who at Centrelink has access to the PSP exit reports and makes recommendations for a JCA assessment after a social outcome?
 - 6) We have been informed that a Centrelink specialist views the exit reports. Who are the specialists in Centrelink and what type of experience and qualifications do they hold?
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HS 43

- 1) Of those JCAs that have been finalised, how many identified a psychological/psychiatric condition for the person who was assessed?
 - 2) What training do Job Capacity Assessors have in identifying symptoms of mental illness?
-

HS 44

Could we have the number of security guards employed at Centrelink offices over each of the preceding financial years, and the location of the offices where the guards are situated?

Could we have the number of what are referred to an "incidence" at Centrelink offices?

How many people have been "banned" from Centrelink offices over each of the last three financial years?

Are security guards at Centrelink offices hired internally or outsourced? Are they all hired from the one company?

Could we have a copy of the procedural guidelines for security guards dealing with Centrelink customers?

What are the numbers of staff turnover in Centrelink over the last two financial years?

HS 45

With regard to the current "search and seizure" powers how many private homes were raided in 2004-05 and 2005-06? Provide a breakdown of the purpose of these raids (e.g. suspected Marriage-like Relationship, suspected double/multiple identity, suspected of working and not declaring income, etc). What action resulted from these raids (e.g. debts raised, prosecution action, payment cancelled, etc)?

What action resulted from these raids on family homes (i.e. number and amount of debts raised, number of people prosecuted)?

How many of these raids occurred when young children were on the premises?

Can you outline the procedures about the return of confiscated documents? Are clients told that these will be returned within 72 hours?

HS 46

How much has been spent by Centrelink on private investigators in the 2005-06 financial year?

How many people were subject to optical surveillance in the last two financial years? Of these numbers, how many cases led to no negative consequences for the Centrelink customer?

HS 47

We are aware the some cosmetic surgeons are doing work in their (unaccredited) rooms under completely unregulated conditions which enables patients to claim their costs (as high as \$5000) on the Medicare safety net.

What procedures are in place to ensure that:

1. The right Medicare item is claimed?
 2. If a claim is made for an out-of-hospital procedure, then this is appropriate?
 3. Claims on the Medicare safety net are appropriate?
-

HS 48

Please provide updated information on the current child support population in Australia, including:

- a. numbers of payees
 - b. numbers of payers
 - c. numbers of children?
-

Questions for all Departments/Agencies

HS 49

With regard to each agencies (and the department itself) that fall inside the department's portfolio, could the department indicate

1. What date the agency's 2005-06 Annual Report was tabled before parliament?
2. If the annual report was not tabled by 31 October 2006, could the department indicate:
 - a. When the report was tabled, or if it remains untabled what date the report is expected to be tabled by.
 - b. Whether the agency's own legislation provides an alternative timeframe for its annual report. If so, could the department provide:
 - i. A description and reference to the relevant provision and legislation.
 - ii. An explanation of why the agency cannot meet the general timeframe set out in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Requirements for Annual Reports, and so requires an alternative timeframe?
 - c. Whether the agency was granted an extension under section subsections 34C(4) - (7) of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901*? If so, could the department provide:
 - i. The date for finalizing the report as set out in the extension.
 - ii. The reason given for granting the extension.
 - iii. The date that the Minister tabled in Parliament a statement explaining why an extension was granted.
 - iv. A copy of the Minister's statement.
 - d. Where the agency's legislation doesn't provide for an alternative timeframe (as per question b) nor was the agency granted an extension (as per question c) could the department provide:
 - i. Explanation for why the Annual Report was tabled outside the timeframe set by DPM&C despite there being no provision alternative timeframe set out in the agency's legislation nor there being any formal extension granted.

Details of any other arrangement in place for the tabling of the agency's Annual Report.

HS 50

With regard to the preparation of Possible Parliament Questions briefs or other such documents intended to brief Minister's on an issue specifically for Question Time, could the department/agency provide:

1. The number of such briefs prepared in each of the last three financial years (2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06).
2. The number of staff who are responsible for coordinating such briefs and the salary level they are engaged at.
3. The name of internal unit/team that those staff belong to and a description of its other responsibilities.
4. The total budget associated with the unit/team referred to in response to part 3.

HS 51 – HS 57

- (1) What sum did the department spend during 2005-2006 on external
 - (a) barristers and
 - (b) solicitors (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor and any others).
 - (2) What sum did the department spend on internal legal services.
 - (3) What is the department's projected expenditure on legal services for 2006-2007.
-

HS 58

What is the process/timing for undertaking new child support assessments, when will the new assessments be finalised, and how long before the new formula commences on 1 July 2008 will people receive their new assessments?

HS 59

Financial Case Management

1. Which non-government organisations (NGOs) are currently on Centrelink's register to provide financial case management services? How many NGOs have been placed on the register but subsequently decided to withdraw?
 2. What training has been provided to NGOs providing financial case management?
 3. Does DEWR/Centrelink collect data on the types of essential expenses paid for under financial case management? If yes (a) what is the average actual expenditure paid for each participant per week of income suspension? (b) how many clients assessed essential expenses exceed their notional entitlement? What is the magnitude of this shortfall (with shortfall indicated by highest gap experienced, lowest gap experienced, median gap and mean gap)
 4. What is the average administrative cost incurred by Centrelink in making ad hoc payments directly to vendors?
-

HS 60

Compliance

1. How many participation failures have resulted in (a) Suspension of payment until compliance with the original requirement? (b) Suspension of payment for 8 weeks?
2. For participation failures resulting in suspension of payment until compliance with the original requirement, please provide the total number of participation failures by reason.

3. For participation failures resulting in suspension of payment until compliance with the original requirement, what is the proportion that resulted in payment being suspended for (a) Less than 1 day? (b) 1-7 days? (c) 7-14 days? (d) greater than 14 days?

4. Compliance For participation failures that resulted in suspension of payment for 8 weeks, how many participation failures were a result of (a) Three participation failures in 12 months? (b) Someone becoming unemployed voluntary? (c) Dismissal due to misconduct? (d) refusal to accept a suitable job offer? (e) Failure to commence, complete or participate in, or comply with the conditions of, an approved program of work?

HS61

Contact Model

Will Centrelink staff conducting Participation Interviews be provided with training to identify symptoms of mental illness?

HS62

Newstart Data

1. How many participation reports have been provided to Centrelink for people receiving Newstart allowance on the basis of being a (a) person with a partial capacity to work? (b) principal carer?

2. For how many of these participation reports did Centrelink determine that (a) The person had a reasonable excuse for not meeting participation requirements? (b) That the offer of employment fell within the definition of unsuitable work?