

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 October 2009 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Child Support Program – Departure Prohibition Orders

Question reference number: HS7 (a-d)

Senator: Bernardi

Type of question: *Written*

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Question:

The Ombudsman's report was critical of the CSA's targeted approach to Departure Prohibition Orders eg the aim to issue 4,500 DPOs and collect \$25.8 million in payments by 2010, because the pressure of meeting the target may encourage staff to issue DPOs in inappropriate circumstances. The Ombudsman made a recommendation reflecting his concerns. (Commonwealth Ombudsman report, *CSA: Administration of Departure Prohibition Order powers*, June 2009, p.36)

- a) What was the CSA's response to that recommendation?
- b) Has any action been taken to address the Ombudsman's concerns?
- c) CSA's response to the draft report mentioned that additional training for DPO teams would be provided. (Commonwealth Ombudsman report, *CSA: Administration of Departure Prohibition Order powers*, June 2009, p.37) Have the DPO teams received this additional training?
- d) What are the details of this training?

Answer:

- a) The CSP accepted this recommendation.
- b) The CSP has removed the activity target from the benchmarks. The CSP continues to report on the value of collections attributable to this activity as a means of ensuring the program's ongoing effectiveness.
- c) Yes, additional training was provided to DPO staff in July 2009.
- d) The training provided focused on effective decision-making and submission writing.