

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee

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

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Pension recipient reporting income over the phone

Question reference number: HS22

Senator: Boyce

Type of question: *Written*

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Question:

How long, on average, does it take for a pension recipient to report their income over the phone?

Answer:

The average time taken for a pension recipient to report their income varies depending on which of the two telephone methods are used.

With the first option, a pension recipient can call a number that is dedicated to their payment type and be connected to a Customer Service Advisor at a Centrelink Call Centre. The average wait time over the three weeks to 6 November 2009 on the retirements line was 29 seconds; this can vary seasonally and when there are changes to payments. The average length of time to report income to a Customer Service Advisor once connected is six and a half minutes.

Alternatively, once registered, a pension recipient can telephone Centrelink's Interactive Voice Recognition service, which does not need a Customer Service Advisor to input the earnings. This service answers automatically after a few rings and the average length of time to report income is three and a half minutes.