

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee

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

### Human Services Portfolio

**Topic:** Service Benchmarks

**Question reference number:** HS34 a-i

**Senator:** Scullion

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 4 December 2009

**Number of pages:** 3

#### **Question:**

- a) What is the current telephone call answer time average?
- b) What is the longest answer time?
- c) How many callers complain that they receive busy tone or the call dials out? In other words what is the unmet demand?
- d) Is this broken down by individual number? (ie specific number for youth allowance, aged pension enquiries etc)
- e) What statistics are kept on Centrelink office based transactions?
- f) How many people are seen each day in a Centrelink office?
- g) What is the average wait times in a Centrelink office?
- h) What are the peak wait times?
- i) How does this compare to the previous reporting periods?

**Answer:**

- a) For period 1 July to 20 October 2009, the average speed of answer was 73 seconds.
- b) The key performance indicator of 70 per cent of calls answered in 150 seconds is measured on an annual basis. This means that the average speed of answer of 73 seconds noted above is a good level of service, but clearly there will be days because of high demand, outages and other factors that the wait times will vary.

For period 1 July to 20 October 2009, the longest wait time in the five main business lines was just over 61 minutes on 21 July 2009. This was during the peak call period for Centrelink Call for which there were 144,193 calls answered across main queues on that day. Normally daily call volumes are around 100,000 calls a day (Note: this does not include any days with a major telephony outage).

- c) For the period 1 July 2009 to 18 October 2009, there were 1,408 customers who complained about the Call Centre being busy. The unmet demand for this period was 398,772, which equates to 3.7 per cent of all calls.
- d) As at 18 October 2009, unmet demand by individual queue for the five main business queues was:

Queue	Unmet Demand (number)	Unmet De ma nd %
Retirements	86,496	7.2%
Youth and Students	57,064	6.8%
Disability Seniors Carers	68,733	6.4%
Employment Services	71,069	5.3%
Families	112,879	3.2%
Other	2531	0.09%
All Queues	398,772	3.7%

The high unmet results for the main queues is due to the large seasonal peaks in demand that occur across the year.

- e) Centrelink keeps transactional information regarding activities for workload management purposes. Examples include; the number of transactions recorded per office, the number of stimulus payment forms lodged per office and outstanding transactions.
- (f) In the 2008-09 financial year, 23,729,857 customer contacts were recorded at reception. For the 2009-10 financial year to date, (30 October 2009) 9,061,714 customer contacts were made. This equates to an average of 104,157 contacts per day.
- (g) The average reception queue wait time in Centrelink Customer Service Centres (CSC) across Australia in October 2009 was 2.57 minutes, compared to 2.94 minutes in October 2008. The average sit down wait times in October 2009 was 11.27 minutes compared to 13.23 minutes at the end of October 2008.

- (h) Peak wait times vary in CSCs but tend to be around 10.00-10.30 am, 1.00-2.00 pm and 3.00-3.30 pm each day. Other local factors such as bus and train timetables may also influence peak wait times at individual CSCs.
- (i) Data comparing previous reporting periods is included in the answers to questions above.