

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee

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

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Data – Same-Sex Partnerships

Question reference number: HS56

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: *Written*

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

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Provide data on the numbers of people whose Centrelink payments were cancelled, and stayed cancelled, since 1 July 2009 as a consequence of declaring a same-sex partnership, by payment type.
- b) Provide data on the numbers of people who had a rate reduction (but were not cancelled), and provide data on the average loss of payment, per week, and how many affected, since 1 July 2009 as a consequence of declaring a same-sex partnership, by payment type.
- c) Provide data on the numbers of people who had a rate increase since 1 July 2009 as a consequence of declaring a same-sex partnership, by payment type.

Answer:

- a) From 1 July 2009 until 30 September 2009, there were a total of 346 people whose Centrelink payments were cancelled, and stayed cancelled, as a consequence of declaring a same-sex partnership. The following data represents the cancellations, by payment type:

Payment Type	Number of cancellations
Age Pension	20
Disability Support Pension	36
Family Tax Benefit	159
Newstart Allowance	57
Parenting Payment (single)	52
Other *	22
Total	346

* Other – includes multiple payment types where <20 customers were cancelled.

- b) A number of factors can influence a customer's rate of payment. Centrelink does not collect customer information in a format that allows all of the variables to be considered in identifying a change in rate due to a single change in circumstances, such as becoming partnered. Due to this complexity, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations have agreed that Centrelink cannot meet the requirements to provide this data.
- c) A number of factors can influence a customer's rate of payment. Centrelink does not collect customer information in a format that allows all of the variables to be considered in identifying a change in rate due to a single change in circumstances, such as becoming partnered. Due to this complexity, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations have agreed that Centrelink cannot meet the requirements to provide this data.