

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee

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

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Centrelink payments

Question reference number: HS87

Senator: Boyce

Type of question: *Hansard F&PA page 130*

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

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator BOYCE—Are you able to give me the figure for what the change [in how many pensioners are required to report their fortnightly income to Centrelink] is? For example, is it up to 56,000 from something?

Mr Cowan—I will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

Prior to 20 September 2009, all pensioners with variable earnings were required to report these earnings to Centrelink regularly. The frequency of reporting periods varied from fortnightly to 13-weekly and was dependent on an individual's pattern of earnings.

Centrelink does not have the exact number of pensioners of Age Pension age before 20 September 2009 broken down by the frequency that they were reporting earnings.

In preparation for the changes, Centrelink identified approximately 75,000 customers who in the preceding 14 weeks had a change in earnings and who could potentially be affected. These customers were sent a letter about the pending changes and were asked to contact Centrelink. Through their responses and follow-up action, the number was refined to about 56,000.