

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: BasicsCard - Work

Question reference number: 4

Senator: N/A

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12.00 pm 2 March 2010

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Are people required to pick up rubbish or other similar jobs to get the BasicsCard?

Answer:

There is no requirement, other than being eligible for Income Management, for a customer to receive and use a BasicsCard.

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: BasicsCard - Retailers

Question reference number: 5

Senator: N/A

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12.00 pm 2 March 2010

Number of pages: 1

Question:

The Committee has received evidence that use of the BasicsCard at all retailers, such as at markets, can be an issue. Can Centrelink respond?

Answer:

Any merchant can lodge an application to be assessed for the BasicsCard. The policy in relation to the appointment of merchants is a matter for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The scope of the BasicsCard scheme does not extend to markets where trade occurs only for short periods of time. The scope is limited to merchants that sell priority goods and services from established places of business.

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: BasicsCard – Back-up Systems

Question reference number: 6

Senator: N/A

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12.00pm 2 March 2010

Number of pages: 1

Question:

The Committee has received evidence that the operation of the BasicsCard can be compromised in situations when computers go down – what kind of back-up systems exist for such circumstances? How often have these back-up systems been used?

Answer:

BasicsCard operates on the standard EFTPOS network. This network operates on a 24 hour, seven days a week basis.

Centrelink does have contingency systems, such as the allocation of funds via other payment methods such as cheque or credit card, in place to assist customers to access their Income Managed funds if an outage to the EFTPOS network occurs. Outages to the EFTPOS network are generally infrequent and for a short period of time. The outages affect all EFTPOS transactions not just BasicsCard.

Centrelink is unable to provide accurate data on the number of EFTPOS outages that have occurred since the implementation of BasicsCard. Some outages are so short that no impact on customers occurs and therefore Centrelink is not notified of the outage.

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: BasicsCard – Transition Issues

Question reference number: 7

Senator: N/A

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12.00pm 2 March 2010

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Transition issues if/when income management expands into new areas – what has Centrelink learnt from the roll-out in the Northern Territory and what processes have been put in place to minimise future transition issues?

Answer:

Centrelink continuously reviews and implements changes to all processes to ensure that learnings are incorporated into our service offers. For example, a new BasicsCard "1800" balance checking line was introduced to provide greater access for Income Managed customers to check their BasicsCard balance.

Centrelink, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Human Services are working collaboratively on the new income management transition, with regular consultation occurring to ensure that customers receive information and support on the proposed changes.