

Senate Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities

The committee would also like to know whether the Ntaria school has been approved for funding to purchase new computers through the National Secondary School Computer Fund. If the school has been approved how many computers will they receive funding for?

Response

Ntaria school (DEEWR ID 16575) were successful in their Round One application to the National Secondary School Computer Fund and were granted funding for one computer. At the time of the preliminary audit of computers in school in February 2008, the schools' total enrolment was advised to be 115, with a total enrolment for years 9-12 of 2. Funding in the first three rounds of the Fund was designed to improve the computer to school ratio to one computer per two students in years 9-12.

Funding was paid by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to the NT Department of Education and Training in June 2008. DEEWR has been advised that the school installed this computer on 11 September 2008.

The school will continue to benefit from the Fund. The final target for the program is one computer per student in Years 9-12 by 31 December 2011.

The funding calculations for the future were based on 2007 school census data. There is now the opportunity for education authorities to advise us of significant changes to enrolment data. The Northern Territory Department of Education and Training advises that they are rebasing all their enrolment data and will advise DEEWR of changes to enrolment data. DEEWR has been advised that the school has had an increase in enrolments in Years 9-12.

REGIONAL AND REMOTE HEARING

QUESTION

DATE ASKED: 9 June 2009

Question

Senator Siewert asked the Minister representing the Minister for Human Services, in writing, on 9 June 2009:

Senator SIEWERT Can you tell me how much, on average, people are accumulating in their income managed funds?

Mr Maloney I can tell you how much is in there at the moment. I am trying to do the maths in my head as to what that equates to. There is about \$3.6 million in unallocated funds currently across the 15,000 or so customers. As you would appreciate, that goes up and down as people get paid and as people spend money and make allocations. But that figure has been reasonably steady for some time now.

Senator SIEWERT You have another table that shows the type of customers under each of the different payment types, and 5.53 per cent are youth allowance. Are any of those students studying outside the NT?

Ms Gaha I would have to take that on notice.

Senator SIEWERT If you could, and if you could tell me the numbers of students that are studying outside the NT.

Ms Gaha They would be typically on Abstudy.

Senator SIEWERT If they are outside?

Ms Gaha That is correct, because there is an allowance that covers them.

Senator SIEWERT or those living outside?

Ms Gaha Yes. I will check that for you.

Answer

There are fewer than 20 students on Youth Allowance in the Northern Territory.

We are unable to release information on whether they are studying outside of the Northern Territory. Centrelink does not report or provide detailed information on numbers less than 20 as this may enable a customer or group of customers to be identified.

REGIONAL AND REMOTE HEARING

QUESTION

DATE ASKED: 9 June 2009

Senator Siewert asked Mr Grant Tidswell and Ms Jo Gaha representing the Minister for Human Services, in person, on 9 June 2009:

Question

Senator SIEWERT—Do you keep an updated list around customers coming in for access to financial services on an ongoing basis?

Mr Tidswell—Across the entire organisation or just in terms of the—

Senator SIEWERT—I am particularly interested in the NTER.

Mr Tidswell—I do not know if we would have that.

Ms Gaha—It is just to make a referral.

Mr Tidswell—We keep data in respect to people that are referred to our financial information services offices. We would have to take on notice about the numbers.

Answer

The Financial Information Services Officer (FISO) has not had any direct referrals as a result of the Northern Territory Emergency Response. There is one FISO who provides services across the Northern Territory and Kimberley.

The main role of the FISO includes:

- conducting interviews and seminars with people to assist them to better understand their financial affairs;
- the risks of each financial product type;
- the role of industry professionals;
- the advantages of reducing personal debt;
- building awareness of sensible credit use;
- options on saving and planning for the future; and
- maximising overall retirement income.

REGIONAL AND REMOTE HEARING QUESTION

DATE ASKED: 9 June 2009

Question

Senator SIEWERT—Mr Maloney, you commented that the people could trade the BasicsCard and they could then cancel them. I am wondering how many people have, in fact, come and asked you to cancel cards?

Mr Maloney—I do not have that information with me, but I can certainly find out for you.

Senator SIEWERT—You can take it on notice.

Mr Maloney—Yes.

Answer

As of 12 June 2009, a total of 393 customers (representing 419 cards) have requested that their BasicsCard be cancelled and a new BasicsCard issued.

REGIONAL AND REMOTE HEARING

QUESTION

DATE ASKED: 9 June 2009

Senator Siewert asked Mr Grant Tidswell and Ms Jo Gaha representing the Minister for Human Services, in person, on 9 June 2009:

Question

Senator SIEWERT—I am on page 3, at the bottom, on child support services. CSP is currently negotiating with Centrelink in the Northern Territory on community visits.

Mr Tidswell—I am not fully aware of when that is going to be put in place. I understand that the group that is responsible for that is the Northern Territory Operations Group and they would see it as part of the sensible expanded service offer as we go into communities.

Senator SIEWERT—I am not having a go; I have a record of looking at the child support program and I am interested if they have started and how it is being picked up.

Ms Gaha—I will take that on notice and find out for you.

Answer

Centrelink's Northern Territory Operations Group (NTOG) met with the Team Leader Regional Service Centre, Child Support Agency (CSA) in Darwin to progress joint servicing between NTOG and CSA. The meeting was to discuss a possible process of joint servicing, logistics and costs.

The discussions are being escalated within CSA to its State Manager of Regional Services, to determine and prioritise the communities that they may visit, based on their internal data. CSA will provide NTOG with the details, once they are completed, so scheduling arrangements can commence.

REGIONAL AND REMOTE HEARING QUESTION

DATE ASKED: 9 June 2009

Question

Senator Crossin asked the Minister representing the Minister for Human Services, in writing, on 9 June 2009:

CHAIR It appears we are working through some priorities. We have one other question that cannot possibly be put on notice, I understand, from Senator Crossin.

Senator CROSSIN That is right. Mr Maloney, do you have any local Indigenous people working in your Centrelink offices still on CDEP?

Mr Maloney I could not answer that question.

Ms Gaha Do you mean have we got any Centrelink staff on CDEP?

Senator CROSSIN Yes.

Ms Gaha Not to my knowledge.

Senator CROSSIN Have they all been moved now on to the employment books of Centrelink?

Ms Gaha That is my understanding. We employ people through our HR rather than through CDEP.

Senator CROSSIN Can you check for me?

Ms Gaha I will.

Answer

Centrelink does not have any CDEP participants working in Centrelink.