

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

DESIGN, SCOPE, COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS, CONTRACTS AWARDED AND IMPLEMENTATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE BETTER MANAGEMENT OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM INITIATIVE

PUBLIC HEARING 8 MARCH 2017

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Process

Question reference number: QoN 50

Member:

Type of question: Written

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Question:

At what stage of the Online Compliance Intervention program does a Department of Human Services staff member assess the discrepancy in the individual's information held by Centrelink and the ATO?

Answer:

Staff are involved in the data-matching process, which is overseen by a specialist data team who apply specific parameters to identify differences in the information reported to the Department and information reported to the ATO. The rules to match and select individuals for compliance reviews have remained unchanged. The Department uses the same processes and business rules as were used in the manual system to choose which recipients or former recipients are to be reviewed.

In addition, staff can be involved at any point during the online process to assist the recipient in updating and confirming information. Recipients are able to contact the dedicated compliance phone number 1800 086 400 to explain the income differences and to receive assistance with the online process.

There have always been multiple points throughout the online system where assistance from a staff member is automatically triggered by the system and the case is referred to a staff member for action. The triggers currently include:

- where the recipients income circumstances are complex for example, where a recipient indicates they have earnings from other sources;
- did not work for an employer;
- may have received allowances, lump sums or other income;
- does not have access to payslips or bank statements;
- is required to provide evidence of their income; or

- does not accept the outcome.

Further, if a recipient requests an explanation or a reassessment of the compliance outcome this is undertaken by a staff member. Staff are also involved, if the recipient requests a formal review.