Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 27 May 2010 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Social Work Services

Ouestion reference number: HS 63b

Senator: BOYCE

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 July 2010

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Does the department offer any counselling to income support recipients? If not, why not?

Answer:

Centrelink employs over 600 professionally qualified social workers who are able to assist people receiving income support. They provide professional assessments, counselling and support services to Centrelink customers and work with local community agencies to improve outcomes for Centrelink customers.

Social workers will listen, give support and help customers to work out their options for resolving problems and issues in their lives. Social Workers can assist customers by:

- offering short term counselling and support;
- giving information about, or referring customers to, other services in the community such as housing assistance, counselling, health, legal services, support groups and emergency financial assistance;
- providing customers with information about the range of payments and services available from Centrelink; and
- determining if customers are eligible for payment under special circumstances, such as when a young person has problems remaining at home or where a person is fleeing a situation of domestic violence.

Customers can access social workers in Customer Service Centres or through the Centrelink Call Centre network.