

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES CROSS PORTFOLIO INDIGENOUS MATTERS 25 FEBRUARY 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Opportunity shops approved as BasicsCard merchants

Question reference number: HS 4

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard CA page 19

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Question:

Senator SIEWERT - I think that is all the information I have on the breakdown of specific figures, thank you. Can I go to the BasicsCard very quickly. I have only a few questions because I know that we have asked about that quite a bit in the past. In terms of the expansion of the BasicsCard - and I know there is a huge list now where there is access to what I call opportunity shops; that is, the charity shops or second-hand goods stores - how many opportunity shops or second-hand shops now have access to the BasicsCard, if that information is easily accessible?

Ms Hefren-Webb - I do not have that information. I do not know if Centrelink does.

Ms Cartwright - The way the BasicsCard merchants approval framework works is that the merchant or BasicsCard provider would provide us with what their main business purpose is. One of the shops that you describe may well be clothing, for instance, so we would categorise that store as a clothing store. I will certainly take it on notice to see if we do have the data that you have specifically asked for, but it may be that they are categorised under their main source of business, and I imagine most of those would be clothing.

Senator SIEWERT - Has that issue been raised with you? It has been raised with me on many occasions - that is, people not being able to access their BasicsCard in opportunity shops.

Ms Cartwright - I know that we do have some opportunity shops in the Northern Territory; I have actually visited some myself. There are some but, as I mentioned, we will need to get that data for you or have the names of those shops located. I have activated a store myself in the Northern Territory - a Red Cross store in Katherine - so they are there.

Answer:

As at 21 January 2011, there were 68 opportunity shops or second-hand shops approved as BasicsCard merchants.