

## Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

### ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES - 16 FEBRUARY 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Human Services Portfolio

**Topic:** Weekly Payment of Centrelink Entitlements

**Question reference number:** HSW 21

**Senator:** Siewert

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 29 March 2012

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

1. At 1 January 2012, how many people were receiving weekly payments?
2. Could the department provide a breakdown by payment types?
3. How many people seeking to access weekly payment options had their claims rejected?
4. Has there been any evaluation of weekly payments? If so, please table the documents.
5. What are the plans to evaluate the availability of weekly payments?

**Answer:**

1. Owing to data extraction processes, the nearest date to 1 January 2012 is 6 January 2012. At 6 January 2012, there were a total of 14,378 people receiving income support payments weekly.
2. The table below shows the numbers of customers by payment type for the fortnight ending 6 January 2012.

<b>Payment Type</b>	<b>Fortnight ending 6/1/12</b>
ABSTUDY	50
Age Pension	184
Carer Payment	235
Disability Support Pension	7,433
Parenting Payment (Single)	209
Austudy	18
Newstart Allowance	3,939
Partner Allowance	1
Sickness Allowance	7
Special Benefit	49
Widow Allowance	14
Youth Allowance	2,239
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,378</b>

3. Customers can access weekly payments in one of two ways. Weekly payments can be proposed where a Customer Service Advisor believes the customer might benefit from such an arrangement, or a customer can request that entitlements be paid on a weekly basis. The department does not maintain records of those whose requests for weekly payments are declined.
4. No.
5. The Department of Human Services and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs have agreed to conduct a joint evaluation before 2015.