

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Unknowing Fraud – Part-time Workers

Question reference number: HSW 4

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 1

Question:

People (particularly women) are getting in trouble for fraud because of part time work and the complicated system.

1. What is Centrelink doing to improve the process to help people avoid overpayment?
 - a. Has there been a focus on improving the system for part time workers?
2. The Law Reform Commission recently tabled a report about social security fraud. Are you aware of the report and its recommendations? Are you acting on any the findings in the report?

Answer:

1. During 2010-11 the Department of Human Services (the department) conducted an early intervention trial for customers who have recently commenced employment to ensure they understand how to correctly declare their employment circumstances and to reduce the likelihood of incurring a debt.

This trial will be expanded in July 2012 through the compliance measure announced in the 2011-12 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook process. This measure will provide for an additional 250,000 targeted early interventions annually for customers at risk of incorrect payment as a result of employment.

The intervention includes all employment types as well as part- time workers.
2. The department is aware of the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) report titled 'Family Violence and Commonwealth Laws – Improving Legal Frameworks (ALRC Report 117)' and its recommendations which was tabled on 7 February 2012. The department is considering the report and its recommendations.