

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Paid Parental Leave – Payment Delays

Question reference number: HS 16

Senators: Carol Brown, Fifield

Type of question: Hansard page 110

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

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator CAROL BROWN: Are there any paid parental leave payments made after the payment is due? I can understand this delay when people are signing up and the employer is signing up as well as the employee, but is there a delay after the payment is due?

Mr Tidswell: Our aim is to process those post-claim activities as quickly as possible.

Ms Campbell: Once we have been provided all the information that is required.

Senator FIFIELD: Could you take on notice whether at any time there have been delays of five weeks for processing baby bonus and paid parental leave applications?

Ms Campbell: Again it could be possible that there may be individual cases. Often we have sought further information and have had to wait for the customer to provide that information.

Senator FIFIELD: Yes. I mean what the average time is over whatever period you tend to measure these things. I do not know if you do it quarterly or monthly or you have a rolling average.

Ms Campbell: And we generally stop the clock when we are waiting for a customer to provide the information to us, so we do not count the time that it takes them to do that.

Senator FIFIELD: Fair enough.

Answer:

The date that a Parental Leave payment is due for a customer can vary due to a number of factors, including:

- the date of the child's birth or adoption;
- the customer's nominated start date of their Paid Parental Leave period (this can be within 52 weeks following the birth or adoption);
- employer payroll processing cut-off dates; and
- employee pay dates and pay frequencies.

In order to make a Parental Leave payment, the department must ensure that a customer is eligible for the payment, which requires information to be provided to the department from the customer, such as proof of birth or adoption. Additionally, the department must ensure that employers accept responsibility to provide payment to their eligible employees, and have registered and provided all of the information required to fulfil this obligation.

The majority of Paid Parental Leave claims are finalised within 21 days. There are circumstances when individual claims for payment have not been paid for over five weeks, and generally this is due to one of the interrelated factors described above.

The average processing time for Paid Parental Leave claims is 19 days.