

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-17 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 1.6 Income Support for Seniors

Question No: SQ16-000344

Topic: Pension Assets Test Changes

Hansard page: Written

Senator Murray Watt asked:

Could you please provide:

- a) The number of pensioners worse off as a result of the assets test changes by electorate and state.
- b) The average amount by which these pensioners are worse off.
- c) The number of pensioners who will lose their pension entirely, by electorate and state.
- d) The average amount by which these pensioners are worse off.
- e) The number of pensioners who will be worse off by pension type.
- f) A detailed comparison of the benefits and concessions available with the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card and the Health Care by State?

Answer:

(a) – (d) The answers to questions (a) to (d) were provided in response to Senate Question on Notice No 2558 of 28 August 2015.

The tables provided in response to that question provided estimates of the number of pensioners who will be affected by the assets test changes that will take place from 1 January 2017, and the impact on their pension rate. The estimates were based on known pensioner circumstances at the time of the 2015-16 Budget.

The actual numbers affected and pension rate impacts will depend on actual pensioner circumstances, including asset levels, as at 1 January 2017.

Note that the above numbers and pension rate impacts did not include Veterans' Affairs pensioners.

(e) Affected social security pensioners by pension type

Payment Type	Cancellations	Decrease
Age Pension	86,009	214,906
Bereavement Allowance	Less than 5	Less than 5
Carer Payment	1,450	5,053
Disability Support Pension	1,124	5,345
Wife Disability Support Pension	5	23

These estimates are based on known pensioner circumstances at the time of the 2015-16 Budget.

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The actual numbers affected and pension rate impacts will depend on actual pensioner circumstances, including asset levels, as at 1 January 2017.

Note that the above numbers and pension rate impacts do not include Veterans' Affairs pensioners.

(f) Benefits and concessions available with the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card and the Health Care by State

All Commonwealth concessions cards provide access to a range of Commonwealth Government concessions including cheaper Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme prescription items and access to the lower threshold of the Extended Medicare Safety Net. State or territory of residence has no bearing on access to these concessions. Concessions offered to card holders by states and territories vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.