

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

Examination of Additional Estimates 2009-2010

Additional Information Received

CONSOLIDATED VOLUME 3

CROSS PORTFOLIO INDIGENOUS MATTERS

**EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE
RELATIONS PORTFOLIO**

HUMAN SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Please note that Additional Information received relating to the Cross Portfolio Indigenous matters hearing for FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO and HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO is included in the volumes for these portfolios

30 APRIL 2010

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATING TO THE EXAMINATION OF ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE FOR 2009-2010

Included in this volume are answers to written and oral questions taken on notice and tabled papers relating to the additional estimates hearing on Indigenous matters pursuant to Senate Resolution of 26 August 2008 held on 12 February 2010

* Please note that the tabling date of 13 May 2010 is the proposed tabling date

Senator	Quest. No.	Vol. 3 Page No.	Date tabled in the Senate or presented out of session*
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EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO

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HUMAN SERVICES PORTFOLIO – Centrelink Agency

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Siewert	1	BasicsCard - fee	18.03.10
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Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0026_10

Senator Scullion asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 42.

Question

DEPARTMENTALLY BROKERED TRAINING COURSES

Mr Griew—I have a couple of examples of a number of departmentally brokered training courses we have assisted particular employers with through the covenant. There were 11 participants in ISS Facility Services through on-the-job training. With Fortescue Metals Group we helped broker training through the Pundulmurra TAFE in Port Hedland. For the Australasian Maritime Institute we also helped organise maritime preemployment training. There are a number of examples where we have worked with the covenant and employers. Senator SCULLION—This is in maritime pre-employment? Mr Griew—The last one was pre-training for employment in the maritime industry with a particular employer. Senator SCULLION—So that is the petroleum offshore— Mr Griew—I would have to take on notice, unless the Ms Wood has the answer to that question, who that particular company works with.

Answer

The maritime pre-employment training course referred to, was run by Australasian Maritime Institute Pty Ltd. Ten positions were contracted.

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0027_10

Senator Scullion asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 42.

Question

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS IN AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT COVENANT

Senator SCULLION—As part of the Australian government's role in supporting the Australian Employment Covenant I understand you were going to be assisted in tracking some of the positions that go through. Are you able to tell me how many Indigenous Australians who were placed into work under the covenant are still employed or the amount who have gone, just so I can get an idea of the retention rates? Ms Wood—One of our performance indicators through our arrangements with the covenant is retention in employment at 26 weeks. That is our measuring point, so we know that, of the 622 that have commenced employment, 88 have reached the 26-week mark. I do not have information about people that have moved out of employment. Senator SCULLION—Perhaps you could help me with that figure so I can understand it. Ms Wood—Sure. Senator SCULLION—Of the 622, you say the figure of 88 having passed the 26-week mark is probably not right. So 622 could well be the number of people who simply have not been employed for the full 26 weeks? Mr Griew—Or have not yet reached the 26-week point, bearing in mind we are six months into a new employment system. Senator SCULLION—I am trying to get a feel for how many people are going into the system and staying in the system. Could these all be still in the system? Mr Griew—We will take on notice some further way of analysing that for you.

Answer

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has provided the following response.

The Australian Employment Covenant Executive is responsible for collecting information on the participation in the Covenant and reporting verified outcomes to DEEWR. The department is currently awaiting a report from the AEC Executive. In the case of those participants who have received the direct support of DEEWR programs and are therefore tracked in departmental systems, the following figures can be reported.

As at 25 February 2010 departmental systems showed 121 AEC employment commencements. Of those:

- 91 (75%) were in employment;
 - 29 (24%) had resulted in 26 week outcomes;
 - 62 (51%) were in employment but for a shorter period of time than would allow for a claim for a 26 week outcome to be made. (It maybe

not enough time had elapsed in the course of their employment or their employment service provider or employer hasn't yet claimed a 26 week outcome. It is also possible that some of this group have dropped out of work but notification of this has yet to be received)

- 21 (17%) had left the employment recorded in the system before 26 weeks (It is possible that some may have left for other employment); and
- 9 (8%) whose status was unclear in the system but is likely to be resolved over time as information is updated.

As at 28 February 2010 AEC advised that 903 people had commenced employment and 218 people had reached the 26-week mark.

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0028_10

Senator Boyce asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 44.

Question

JOB SERVICES AUSTRALIA - TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS

Mr Griew—Ninety per cent of 8,903 CDEP participants in remote area CDEPs that are continuing, but from before the changes in policy, are now enrolled with Job Services Australia providers, who will support them for movement into the mainstream labour market. So, in terms of a set of results, that is a fairly significant outcome. Senator BOYCE—Do you have figures for the Torres Strait? Mr Griew—I would have to take that on notice in order to break that down between Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders.

Answer

As at 29 January 2010, there were 1280 Torres Strait Regional Authority CDEP participants. Of these about a third (405) were registered with Job Services Australia providers.

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0029_10

Senator Scullion asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 46.

Question

INDIGENOUS JOB SEEKERS

Senator SCULLION—Would you be able to give me a figure on how many individuals are falling out of the system? In other words, those people with whom we have tried our best but are simply not turning up or for whatever reason. The set of requirements would say that they require some sort of a breaching or punitive measure. Mr Griew—I can give you some figures on compliance action. Senator SCULLION—Would you be able to give me those figures in just this one demographic of CDEP non-remote? Mr Griew—I would have to take that on notice.

Answer

CDEP continues to operate in remote areas where there are no viable labour markets. In the non-remote locations where CDEP reduced in size or closed from 30 June 2009, a total of 116 'applied' compliance actions have been taken in respect of the 1964 former participants who have moved onto an income support payment with participation requirements. The following table provides a breakdown of the compliance action.

Compliance Action	Compliance Applied
Connection Failures*	85
No Show No Pay Failures	22
Reconnection Failures	3
Unemployment Non Payment Periods	6
Total	116

* A connection failure occurs where a job seeker fails to attend an appointment without a reasonable excuse. There is no financial penalty for a Connection Failure; rather the job seeker is given a requirement to attend a further appointment (a reconnection requirement). If they then fail to attend that further appointment, and do not have a reasonable excuse, this is a Reconnection Failure, and they will stop being paid until they do successfully reconnect.

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0030_10

Senator Siewert asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 46.

Question

CDEP FIGURES PER STATE

Senator SIEWERT—I want to quickly go back to the CDEP question. Is it possible to provide us with a breakdown of the figures per state? Maybe you could take that on notice. Is that possible? If you have got it there, could you table it? Mr Griew—We will take it on notice.

Answer

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has provided the following response.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations does not have portfolio responsibility for Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). Responsibility for CDEP resides with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0031_10

Senator Siewert asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 47.

Question

**INCOME SUPPORT STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS AFFECTED BY CDEP
CLOSURES OR REDUCTIONS**

Senator SIEWERT—I would like to ask one clarification question about when we went through the CDEP figure of 1,964: if you were not in the category of those who had gone on to some form of income support, and you were not in the job placement category, my rough calculation is that there was around 400 left there—do you know what is happening with those not quite 400? Mr Griew—We may have to take that on notice to give you more detail and breakdown if you want it, but the kinds of reasons that a person might be there six months later would include getting a job, their spouse may have earnings that preclude them or they may have chosen not to apply—there is a significant number of the Indigenous population not actually in the labour force, which is an issue the minister alluded to earlier. This is not just a matter of dealing with the unemployed; there is the range of other strategies that the minister mentioned, which are focused on this group as well. But there can be a range of those reasons. Some people in this population could also access Job Services Australia if they chose to, depending on spouse income or people with parenting duties as well. That would be the sort of reason that people are in that group.

Answer

No additional breakdown is available for this group. The department does not hold current information about former CDEP participants who are not receiving income support nor participating in employment services. As part of the CDEP transition Centrelink made at least two contact attempts to ensure all affected participants were made aware of their income support options and to provide assistance in applying. It is up to former CDEP participants as to whether or not they apply for income support. Individuals are not required to provide reasons for not applying.

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0032_10

Senator Boyce asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 48.

Question

CAPE YORK INCOME MANAGEMENT WELFARE REFORM TRIAL

Senator BOYCE—My next questions go to the Cape York income management welfare reform trial, which Senator Furner asked some questions about last night. In the comment that was provided last evening they talked about 40 real jobs being created in Cape York as a result of the CDEP reform. Are you able to give me some more information about you mean by a 'real job'? Dr Harmer—Jo may be able to, but I would have to take that on notice. The people who would know the answers to that specifically are now not here, because they were here for the welfare reform part of Families. Ms Wood—I can speak to that with a certain level of detail, but there might be some more detail that I do not have. Those 40 jobs are similar to the other CDEP jobs that Mr Griew was talking about, where the government has funded roles in government service delivery that have previously relied on CDEP to deliver government services. I do not think I have the details of the specific jobs in Cape York, but that is the kind of roles they are. Senator BOYCE—Would it be able to be broken down into types of jobs? Ms Wood—Yes.

Answer

In 2009 a total of 177 positions were created by the Commonwealth and Queensland State Government in Cape York under the Indigenous Economic Participation National Partnership and 40 positions under the Cape York Welfare Reforms. These jobs were created in health and community care, child care, education, municipal services, rangers, broadcasting and art centre support, night patrol and community liaison positions.

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0033_10

Senator Boyce asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 48.

Refers to previous Human Services Question No HS18.

Question

NEWSTART ALLOWANCES BROKEN DOWN BY STATE FOR INDIGENOUS JOB SEEKERS AND YOUTH ALLOWANCE

Senator BOYCE—Thank you. I just wanted to clarify that. I appreciate that you possibly do not have these figures. The figures given were for the Newstart allowances broken down by state for Indigenous job seekers and youth allowance. In both cases, Queensland had substantially higher figures than any other state or territory. Are you able to explain why this is? Ms Caldwell—We would have to take that on notice.

Answer

The higher number of Indigenous job seekers on New Start Allowance and Youth Allowance doing work experience activities in Queensland is likely a function of the density of the Indigenous population in that state, compared to other states.

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0034_10

Senator Boyce asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 49.

Question

CAPE YORK REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Mr Griew—Yes. I have met people there who are working in that role, but there is further work going on with that community. In Weipa there is a regional partnership agreement with the Minerals Council and three Cape York communities in and around Weipa focusing on economic development and work readiness. That is a \$2.4 million investment. There are a number of business mentors that we are funding in Weipa, in the western cape. There is an employment strategy in Aurukun to link communities with opportunities arising from the Chalco mining venture. Senator BOYCE— Perhaps, Mr Griew, if you could provide me with a list on notice including the numbers who are in actual employment and perhaps, if you have data on people who are in training, those numbers as well. Mr Griew—We can do that if you wish.

Answer

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has provided the following response.

Senator Boyce requested data for both Mossman Gorge Gateway project and the communities involved in the regional partnership agreement with the Minerals Council. The Department is able to provide information on Mossman Gorge but the information available for Western Cape York is for an area that approximates the communities involved in the regional partnership agreement with the Minerals Council.

The numbers for people in jobs and training in the Mossman Gorge Gateway are as follows:

- 54 commencements into training
- 8 commencements into employment

Employment and training initiatives funded through the Indigenous Employment Program in Cape York Western Cape communities from 9 June 2008 to 28 February 2010 have delivered:

- 299 commencements into pre employment
- 83 commencements into employment

It should be noted that outcomes for the projects have not been finalised, therefore

figures are expected to change.

In addition jobs in government service delivery have been funded directly (refer to CA0032_10).

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0035_10

Senator Boyce asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 49.

Question

40 NEW JOBS IN CAPE YORK

Senator BOYCE—Are there any police on that list? Mr Harmer—I do not know, but we will cover that when we give you the 40 jobs. Senator BOYCE—Okay. Mr Griew—The number I have here in my brief here suggests that there may be some number more than that—about 177. Mr Harmer—Yes, 40 sounds low to me, but I would just like to check. Mr Griew—We will check it out. Senator BOYCE—It is 40 'real' jobs, so perhaps we need to define 'real' as well Ms Wood—I can clarify that issue. There have actually been two stages of this in the cape. There were the initial 40 jobs that supported the Cape York Welfare Reform pilots in those four communities and there have been some additional jobs funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation through COAG. Some more positions in the cape have been supported through that. Senator BOYCE—Perhaps you had better give us relevant dates if it is time-sensitive information. Ms Wood—We can do that.

Answer

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has provided the following response.

Refer to CA0032_10 for answer.

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No. CA0036_10

Senator Scullion asked on 12/02/2010, Hansard page 50.

Question

CDEP ARRANGEMENTS IN NON-REMOTE AREAS

Senator SCULLION—Mr Griew, I asked you a number of questions in regard to the CDEP arrangements in non-remote areas. Would you be able to provide me on notice some similar statistics on the number of breaches, particularly in the remote areas that have had the exemption lifted? Also on notice, could you tell me if you have done any work considering impediments to employment in remote Australia as it applies particularly to Indigenous Australians? Mr Griew—Okay.

Answer

Job Seeker compliance penalties in remote areas

From 1 July 2009 to 31 January 2010 there have been 902 penalties applied to job seekers in remote areas who have not met their participation requirements. It is not possible to reliably identify those jobseekers who may have had a remote area exemption in the past without further analysis.

Work considering impediments to employment in remote Australia as it applies particularly to Indigenous Australians

The Australian Government uses a variety of approaches to support employment outcomes, including for remote areas and for Indigenous Australians. Increasing employment outcomes requires a focus on labour supply (creating a pool of skilled, job-ready workers) as well as supporting labour demand (private and public sector).

Significant employment services reforms were implemented from 1 July 2009. These reforms have led to changes in the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program, the establishment of Job Services Australia (JSA), and the reformed Indigenous Employment Program (IEP). The changes were designed to respond, in part, to some of the challenges faced by Indigenous people in remote locations in accessing employment services and various forms of support that can lead to real jobs. In recognition of the higher cost of providing services in remote locations and helping job seekers overcome barriers to employment, a 1.7 multiplier is applied to JSA Service Fee payments and Employment Pathway Fund credits. This 1.7 multiplier for remote locations is also applied to the Service and Ongoing Support fees for the new Disability Employment Services, implemented from 1 March 2010. The reformed programs aim to better integrate and improve servicing of Indigenous Australians living in remote parts of Australia.

A formal review to evaluate the effectiveness of employment services in remote

areas, incorporating reforms to CDEP, IEP and JSA, will be conducted in 2011, with a further review in 2014.

In addition, over 1500 CDEP jobs have been converted into real jobs in remote locations in recognition that government service delivery is a major source of supply of jobs for Indigenous people in remote locations.

SENATE COMMUNITY AFFIARS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Hearing on Cross-Portfolio Indigenous Matters

In response to the question taken in the Hearing today, Centrelink can provide the following information:

- Between 21 June 2007 and 1 Jan 2010 there have been a total of 116 reviews completed, regarding the decision to apply income management or to not grant an exception;
 - 114 reviews completed by the Authorised Review Officer for which 73 decisions were affirmed and 41 decisions set aside
 - the remaining 2 cases are with the Social Security Appeals Tribunal



Grant Tidswell
Acting Deputy CEO
Centrelink

12 February 2010

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 12 FEBRUARY 2010 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: BasicsCard - Fee

Question reference number: 1

Senator: N/A

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 February 2010

Number of pages: 1

Question:

The Committee would like Centrelink to comment on the following issue raised by Amnesty International during the giving of their evidence on 11 February 2010:

If you shop locally with a BasicsCard, the wife was telling me, it is a \$5 transaction even to get the money out. [CA 10, 11 February 2010]

Answer:

BasicsCard Merchants that have applied and been approved to participate in the BasicsCard program have agreed to adhere to the BasicsCard Merchant Terms and Conditions. The BasicsCard Merchant Terms and Conditions stipulate that Merchants:

"not impose

- (i) any charge or fee on a Card Holder in addition to the price of the goods and services to be supplied, because the Card Holder has made a BasicsCard Transactions; and*
- (ii) a minimum spend for a BasicsCard transaction of more than \$5;"*

BasicsCard Merchants may choose to impose a "minimum spend" for BasicsCard transactions (not a fee), as per the BasicsCard Merchant Terms and Conditions. This cannot be for more than \$5. BasicsCard Merchants are also obliged to ensure that BasicsCards are not used "*.. to obtain any cash from the use of the BasicsCard from the Merchant, whether as a 'cash out' transaction or otherwise;"*

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 12 FEBRUARY 2010 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: BasicsCard - Balance

Question reference number: 2

Senator: N/A

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 February 2010

Number of pages: 2

Question:

The Committee would like Centrelink to comment on the following issue raised by Amnesty International during the giving of their evidence on 11 February 2010:

You never have any knowledge of what the balance is. In order to find out your balance you have to ring Centrelink in Alice Springs or Tennant Creek. If you have a mobile phone or you use a public phone you cannot access the free-call number, so people then have to buy another \$5 phone card and sit on the phone, sometimes for an hour or two hours, people have said, waiting, listening to the music— we all know that music— waiting to be listened to or heard. And they never get through. [CA 10, 11 February 2010]

Answer:

The current methods available to BasicsCard customers to obtain their BasicsCard balance are:

- calling the Income Management Line (13 2594) - this line is available for BasicsCard balances 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and offers automated BasicsCard Balance enquiries and the option to speak with a Centrelink Customer Service Advisor if required;
- calling the Freecall BasicsCard Balance Enquiry Line (1800 057 111) - this is an automated service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (calls from home phones are free, calls from some public and mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate depending on the service provider);
- attending a Centrelink Customer Service Centre, Remote Area Service Centre, Centrelink Community Agent or Remote Servicing Team during business hours;
or
- going to www.centrelink.gov.au to obtain their BasicsCard Balance on-line.

Card holders contacting the Income Management Line (13 2594) and the BasicsCard Balance Enquiry Line (1800 057 111) are presented with an automated facility that allows them to enter their BasicsCard number and 4 digit PIN to obtain their BasicsCard balance without having to wait to speak with a Centrelink Customer

Service Advisor. Calls to the Income Management Line can also be transferred to a Centrelink Customer Service Advisor if further assistance is required.

For the period 1 November 2009 to 31 January 2010, the average time a caller spent in queue on the Income Management Line before being answered by a Centrelink Customer Service Advisor was 65 seconds. For the BasicsCard Balance Line (Interactive Voice Recognition) there is no wait time as the callers are placed straight into the self-service application.

To further assist BasicsCard customers to obtain their BasicsCard balance in remote areas, Centrelink has installed phones in Community Stores that are "hot-linked" to the Income Management Line (13 2594) so that customers will not have to pay for call costs. Between the implementation of BasicsCard and 1 January 2010, there were 76 phones installed in Community Stores across 68 Communities in the Northern Territory. There is currently a phone "hot-linked" to the Income Management Line installed in Elliott available for free use by BasicsCard customers. There is also a Centrelink Community Agent in Elliott who has a phone available for contacting Centrelink for any reason, including for BasicsCard balance enquiries.

Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 12 FEBRUARY 2010 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: BasicsCard - Fee

Question reference number: 3

Senator: N/A

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 February 2010

Number of pages: 2

Question:

A further matter which the Committee would also like to receive a response from Centrelink is in relation to a family with a daughter in boarding school and difficulties because Centrelink requires a three week notice to transfer money:

What really knocks this mob around, and they are not alone, are the problems they are having with their daughter away at school. They are seriously worried about their daughter sticking at school, ironically. This really knocks things around, but the problem is Centrelink requires three weeks notice to transfer money. The kid at school needs pocket money, needs something to participate in events, but they cannot get the money to her through these accounts. This really knocks things around. 'Sometimes she just feels like walking out of school, but we tell her, "Don't do that, because you're at college to learn." Sometimes she wants to do something silly, but I always ring the houseparent and ask her to calm her down and explain to her and tell her we're going to talk to Centrelink to get that money released for her. [CA 10, 11 February 2010]

Answer:

Income Managed funds, which equate to 50 per cent of a customer's income support payment, are utilised to assist customers to meet their priority needs. There are a number of allocation methods available to customers to access their income managed funds to meet their priority needs. These include allocations to Third Party Organisations via direct deduction, direct credit or cheques, and allocations to their BasicsCards.

School Fees can be paid via Income Managed funds (subject to funds being available). When Centrelink receives requests from Income Managed customers about paying these fees from the customer's Income Managed account, Centrelink will discuss with the school about the most appropriate allocation method(s). Centrelink does not require three weeks notice. However, payment of these fees can only be paid if there are sufficient funds available in the customer's Income Managed account.

Income Managed customers still have access to their "discretionary funds", which is the 50 per cent of their income support payment that is not Income Managed. Customers can continue to make personal arrangements via their financial institution to direct any of these "discretionary funds" for pocket money or cash in these situations.

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

**ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 12 FEBRUARY 2010
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Income Management

Question reference number: CLK 3

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard CA page 15, 12 February 2010

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 1 April 2010

Number of Pages: 1

Question:

Senator SIEWERT - Income quarantining has been running for a while. Do you find that there has to be a lot of change to the amount that people allocate through their quarantined funds?

Mr Tidswell - I will start and then I will ask Ms Cartwright to provide some further detail. As you know, we sit down at the outset and try and work out a budget, an allocation process to priority needs. Some people might need more contact than others. We have our remote visiting teams who regularly go to communities, and we work closely to see if the right amounts are going to the right places and things are okay. I do not know if we have got data on how many times people change their allocations accordingly, but we could have a look at that and take that on notice.

Answer:

Accurate data on the number of times people change their Income Management allocations is unable to be extracted from Centrelink systems. Income Management customers may have a single or multiple deductions and will vary the allocation to access and use funds for priority goods and services. Changes to allocations are recorded on the individual customer record but Centrelink is unable to extract this information at the management information level.

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

**ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 12 FEBRUARY 2010
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: BasicsCard Complaints

Question reference number: CLK 5

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard CA page 16, 12 February 2010

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 1 April 2010

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator SIEWERT - Thank you. Since the changed arrangements with the helpline et cetera coming in, has there been a decrease in the number of complaints that you have received?

Ms Cartwright - I would have to take that on notice. The complaints we receive have decreased since we have introduced the 1800 number. The complaints for which we have seen a big decrease in are around how customers access their balance for their BasicsCard. That has decreased substantially since we have introduced the different methods for people to get their balances.

Answer:

The below table provides details on the number of BasicsCard complaints recorded through the Customer Relations line this financial year to the end of February 2010.

Month	Number
July 2009	4
August 2009	4
September 2009	1
October 2009	4
November 2009	0
December 2009	1
January 2010	4
February 2010	1

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 12 FEBRUARY 2010 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: BasicsCard

Question reference number: CLK 7

Senator: Moore

Type of question: Hansard CA page 18, 12 February 2010

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 1 April 2010

Number of pages: 1

Question:

CHAIR - Mr Tidswell, can we get the data you have about numbers of cards and how many clients need more than one? Is there a spreadsheet arrangement that could be provided?

Mr Tidswell - Yes, we can get that for you.

Answer:

The following table depicts the number of BasicsCards issued per customer from 8 September 2008 to 12 March 2010.

Number of BasicsCards	Customers		
	Number	Percentage	Cumulative
1	6,120	28.12%	28.12%
2	4,419	20.30%	48.42%
3	3,020	13.88%	62.30%
4	2,104	9.67%	71.96%
5	1,436	6.60%	78.56%
6	1,104	5.07%	83.63%
7	769	3.53%	87.17%
8	603	2.77%	89.94%
9	450	2.07%	92.01%
10	321	1.47%	93.48%
11	235	1.08%	94.56%
12	204	0.94%	95.50%
13	190	0.87%	96.37%
14	130	0.60%	96.97%
15	96	0.44%	97.41%
16	88	0.40%	97.81%
17	69	0.32%	98.13%
18	72	0.33%	98.46%
19	44	0.20%	98.66%
20+	291	1.34%	100.00%
Total	21,765	100.00%	100.00%

The main reasons customers request a replacement BasicsCard is because the original card has been lost, damaged or stolen.