

**Community Affairs
Legislation Committee**

Examination of Budget Estimates 2002-2003

Additional Information Received

VOLUME 1

**Centrelink, AIFS &
FaCS Output Groups: Cross outputs, 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2**

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO

AUGUST 2002

Note: Where published reports, etc. have been provided in response to questions, they have not been included in the Additional Information volume in order to conserve resources.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATING TO THE EXAMINATION OF BUDGET EXPENDITURE FOR 2002-2003

Included in this volume are answers to written and oral questions taken on notice
relating to the estimates hearings on 3 and 4 June 2002

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ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO
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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 28

Topic: Breaching

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide the following monthly data for the period May 2000 to May 2002 at the most disaggregated geographical level available (eg postcode, CCDs, SLAs, LGAs or Centrelink Office/Region):

- The total number of administrative breach penalties imposed and the number (or proportion) that were 1st, 2nd and 3rd breaches.
- The total number of activity test breach penalties imposed and the number (or proportion) that were 1st, 2nd and 3rd breaches.
- The total number of administrative breach activities (by 1st, 2nd or 3rd breach) that did not result in the imposition of a breach penalty.
- The total number of activity test breach activities (by 1st, 2nd or 3rd breach) that did not result in the imposition of a breach penalty.

Answer:

Breach data from May 2000 to June 2001 is not readily available due to changes in the way data is stored. Breach data at the Centrelink Office/Region is not currently available. However, systems upgrades will allow us to get this data in the next couple of months and could be available to the Committee in August for the 2001-02 financial year. Administrative breaches do not attract an increasing penalty with each subsequent breach as do activity test breaches. Therefore Centrelink does not record whether an administrative breach is a first, second or third breach.

Current financial year to March 2002 breach data for administrative and activity test breaches, at the national level, are detailed below.

There were 60,654 administrative breach activities for the period July 2001 to March 2002. Of those, 35,414, or 58 per cent were imposed and 25,240 (42 per cent) were not.

There were 347,144 activity test breach activities for the same period. Of those 186,990 or (54 per cent) were either not imposed or revoked on review. During this period, 160,154 (or 46 per cent) activity test breaches were imposed. From this figure: 92,618 (57.8%) resulted in first breach penalties being imposed; 42,830 (26.8%) resulted in second breach penalties being imposed; and 24,706 (15.4%) resulted in third and subsequent breach penalties imposed.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 29

Topic: Breach Penalties

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide the current penalty rates for each breaching category. Has there been any change in these rates over the period May 2000 to May 2002? If so, could you please provide the rates that applied in the different periods?

Answer:

The breach rates are expressed as a percentage of the maximum rate of payment applicable to the person's age and circumstances. These percentages have not changed. The first two tables indicate the total income lost for the whole breach period for the various breach penalties. The last table shows the penalty rates and duration of the various breach penalties.

		Newstart		
		Single - 21yrs and over, no children	Single - 21yrs and over, with children	Partnered
Activity Test Breach	1st Breach	\$853.16	\$922.66	\$769.63
	2nd Breach	\$1,137.55	\$1,230.22	\$1,026.17
	3rd Breach	\$1,458.40	\$1,577.20	\$1,315.60
Admin Breach	Rate Reduction	\$379.18	\$410.07	\$342.06
	Non-payment for two weeks	\$364.60	\$394.30	\$328.90

		Youth Allowance						
		Single, no children, under 18yrs, at home	Single, no children, under 18yrs, away from home	Single, no children, 18yrs and over, at home	Single, no children, 18yrs and over, away from home	Single, with children	Partnered, no children	Partnered, with children
Activity Test Breach	1st Breach	\$386.33	\$705.98	\$464.72	\$705.98	\$925.00	\$705.98	\$775.24
	2nd Breach	\$515.11	\$941.30	\$619.63	\$941.30	\$1,233.34	\$941.30	\$1,033.66
	3rd Breach	\$660.40	\$1,206.80	\$794.40	\$1,206.80	\$1,581.20	\$1,206.80	\$1,325.20
Admin Breach	Rate Reduction	\$171.70	\$313.77	\$206.54	\$313.77	\$411.11	\$313.77	\$344.55
	Non-payment for two weeks	\$165.10	\$301.70	\$198.60	\$301.70	\$395.30	\$301.70	\$331.30

<u>Breach rates and duration</u>		
<i>Type of Breach</i>	<i>Period applied</i>	<i>Reduction applied</i>
Admin – reduced rate	13 weeks (6.5 pays)	16%
Admin – non payment	2 weeks (1 pay)	100%
1 st Activity Test	26 weeks (13 pays)	18%
2 nd Activity Test	26 weeks (13 pays)	24%
3 rd Activity Test	8 weeks (4 pays)	100%

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 30

Topic: Breaching

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide for the period 1 July 2001 to present the number of (a) administrative breaches (by 1st, 2nd and 3rd breaches) and (b) activity test breaches (by 1st, 2nd and 3rd breaches) that were reviewed by the ARO, AAT and SSAT. Please provide both the total number of appeals and the number and proportion of appeals that were successful.

Answer:

Decisions reviewed by ARO, SSAT and AAT are as follows:

Activity test and administrative breach appeals that were successful for the period 1 July 2001 to 12 June 2002.

	Total ARO	No. set aside	Percentage
Breaches	7008	3008	43%

	Total SSAT	No. set aside	Percentage
Breaches	909	339	38%

	Total AAT	No. set aside	Percentage
Breaches	62	32	52%

Due to the method of storing data for ARO, SSAT and AAT reviews of administrative and activity test breach appeals, there is no capacity to provide review data pertaining to first, second, third and subsequent breaches. Furthermore, data held does not differentiate between administrative and activity test breaches.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 31

Topic: Centrelink research on the impact of breaching

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Has the Department completed any research on the impact of breaching on (a) the duration of unemployment and (b) the duration on benefits subsequent to the Survey of New Newstart Allowance Claimants (Yann, Campbell, Hoare and Wheeler, 1997)? If so, can you please provide a copy of this research? If not, does the Department have plans to conduct any research on this issue?

Answer:

Centrelink has not undertaken such research and does not propose to do so. Research into the impact of policy on the outcomes sought is the responsibility of the policy Departments.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 26

Topic: Breaching Guidelines

Hansard Page: CA 27

Senator Denman asked:

Can you provide a copy of guidelines for determining either an administrative breach or an activity test breach?

Answer: The Guidelines are as follows:

Determining an Activity Test Breach

Step	Action
1	<p>Is this a third Activity Test breach which will result in a non-payment period for the job seeker ?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, prior to the application of a third Activity Test breach appropriate intervention must be considered to address any factors which prevent the job seeker from fully complying with their obligations. See Third breach alert - intervention for job seekers prior to the application of a third Activity Test breach • If no, go to Step 2
2	<p>Gather the facts and evidence.</p> <p>In order to make an informed decision on whether or not to impose a breach, you need to ensure that you have all the facts and supporting evidence. Depending on the reason for the breach the facts and supporting evidence will vary.</p> <p>Some suggestions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If breach is discovered while customer is present (e.g. new claim interview), discuss circumstances and have the customer make a statement. • Check the customer's record: • CACA screen - for appointments booked, rescheduled, cancelled. • DL screen - for any record of contact regarding the event. • Check the customer's file or appropriate batch stored forms such as: the Employment Separation Certificate, Job Seeker Diaries, Employer Contact Certificate (ECCs), claim form etc. • Gather sufficient evidence to substantiate the decision. <p>Go to step 3.</p>
3	<p>Find the legislative authority and make the decision Breaches are appealable, so to support your decision you need to apply the correct legislation to the individual facts of the case. Ensure every aspect of the legislation has been</p>

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	<p>properly addressed, see Legislation.</p> <p>Wherever possible, you must contact the customer and give them an opportunity to explain their reasons for failing to meet their obligations. The onus is with the customer to provide sufficient proof in each case.</p> <p>Make a decision based on the evidence, facts, legislation and any other issues that have arisen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the decision is not to impose a breach, go to Step 4. • If the decision is to impose a breach, go to Step 5.
4	<p>Breach not to be imposed</p> <p>If after due consideration, a decision is made not to impose a breach, e.g. extenuating circumstances, the decision must be recorded on a DOC with sufficient detail to justify the decision. Remind customer of their continuing job search requirements. Procedure ends here.</p>
5	<p>Breach to be imposed</p> <p>If imposing a breach, current customers must be suspended or cancelled. See Suspension or cancellation of payments when a breach is applied.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to apply the correct start date for the rate reduction period, see [Guide to the Social Security Law, 3.2.11.10, Activity Test Breach Penalties]
6	<p>Manual or automatic coding for breaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain breach codes can only be used for manually coding a breach, while some can only be used for automatic coded breaches - see Activity test breach codes. • Breach codes may be manual or automatic: • Automatic breaches occur when certain details are recorded on NJAT screen. <p>Manually coding a breach is done by the 1-2-1 Customer Service Officer via the NBDS screen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For manual coding, go to Step 7. • For automatic coding, go to Step 8.
7	<p>Manually code breach on system</p> <p>Note: If breach is to be imposed on a new claim, code via the new claim activity by selecting the breaches screen via NTS and complete it as part of the claim process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate to the NDBS screen. Note: there is a script available for income declaration breaches. This can be found in scripts - NEWSTART/Review, DPMO, ODM AND Breach Tasks/Breach Income Declaration; • Enter the actual date the breach occurred in the Breach Date: field on

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	<p>the NBDS screen;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the code for the reason the breach occurred in the Breach Rsn: field; • Enter the date of determination of the breach in the Event Date: field (normally today's date); • Complete the Source: and DOR: fields in the screen footer, and press [Enter]; • Result: The system defaults the correct values in the Breach Type:, Breach Status:, Start Date:, End Date:, and Redn%: fields. The details now display in the summary section of the screen. Other breach results differ for breaches on new claims or existing claims; • Finalise activity via the AR screen. If a customer is current, process suspension/ cancellation prior to finalising breach, see Suspension or Cancellation of payments when a breach is applied. Note: the system will automatically cancel or suspend most records when a breach is recorded (the suspension/cancellation code will be the same as the breach code);
8	<p style="text-align: center;">Automatic breaches</p> <p>Automatic breaches are a result of coding the NJAT screen. Suspension or cancellation of the job seeker's payment must be done manually via the BA screen.</p> <p>For more information on coding the NJAT screen, see Activity Test breach reason codes.</p> <p>Code the NJAT screen with the relevant breach reason codes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failed activity test (result of Job Seeker Diary Review) (BAJ). • Failed Activity Test (following SU19NR review) (BAS). • Failed Activity Test (result of 10 % Intensive review - DP) (BDP). • Failed Activity Test (result of Employer Contact Certificates) (BEA). • Failed to return Employer contact certificates (BEC). • Failed to attend IRM interview (for PFWA) (BIA). • If a customer is current, process suspension/ cancellation, see Suspension or Cancellation of payments when a breach is applied. Finalise activity via the AR screen
9	<p>Record a DOC detailing the decision to impose a breach</p> <p>Documentation of your decision should be an accurate reflection of the assessment process you underwent in reaching your decision. This is particularly important in cases that may be</p>

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	subject to appeal. Both sides of any assessment need to be considered to come to a quality decision. Document each contact with the customer to ensure a complete and accurate record of events. Go to step 10.
10	Notifying customers of the imposed breach The system will send an automatic letter advising of the breach and the suspension/ cancellation for current customers.

Determining an Administrative Breach

Step	Action
1	<p style="text-align: center;">Determine if an administrative breach has occurred</p> <p>Has the customer failed to meet an administrative requirement, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to comply with a requirement to attend a Centrelink office; • Failure to notify of changes to circumstances; • Failing to reply to letters from Centrelink; • Failing to provide a partner's Tax File Number. •
2	<p style="text-align: center;">Apply correct legislation to the individual facts of the case</p> <p>As administrative breaches are appealable, it is imperative that when determining if the job seeker has incurred an administrative breach that the applicable section of social security law is noted.</p>
3	<p style="text-align: center;">Decide whether to impose an administrative breach</p> <p>Consider if the job seeker has a disability or medical condition that would contribute to failing to meet an administrative requirement. Check the Medical Condition (MC) screen, Pension Disability Information (PDI) screen and the Job seeker Disadvantage (JODV) screen to see if the job seeker has a medical condition before breaching the job seeker. If there is no condition then follow the breaching guidelines. If there is a condition consult with the CDO [crp/lookjob/00113091.htm]</p> <p>Ensure there is sufficient evidence to substantiate the decision.</p> <p>Wherever possible, you must contact the customer and give them an opportunity to explain their reasons for failing to meet their obligations. The onus is with the customer to provide sufficient proof in each case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If decision is not to impose an administrative breach, go to Step 4. • If decision is to impose an administrative breach, go to Step 5.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">Decision is not to impose administrative breach</p> <p>If, after due consideration, a decision is made not to impose a breach, i.e., extenuating circumstances, the decision must be recorded on a DOC with sufficient detail to justify the decision.</p> <p>Remind the customer of their continuing notification requirements.</p>

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	Procedure ends here.
5	<p style="text-align: center;">Decision is to impose an administrative breach</p> <p>If imposing a breach, suspend or cancel payments, see <i>Suspension or cancellation of payments when a breach is applied</i>.</p> <p>For current customers, see [<i>Guide to the Social Security Law, 3.2.11.20, Administrative breach penalties</i>] to determine the 'Start Date' of the breach Rate Reduction Period.</p> <p>For customers who are cancelled, the 'Start Date' should be date paid to + 1 (DPT + 1).</p>
6	<p style="text-align: center;">Manual or automatic administrative breach coding?</p> <p>Certain breach codes can only be used for manually coding a breach, while some can only be used for automatic coded breaches - check the <i>administrative breach reason codes</i> for a list of codes and if they are manual or automatic.</p> <p>Automatic breaches occur when certain details are recorded on Job seeker Activity Test (NJAT) screen.</p> <p>Manually coding a breach is when the One-to-One Customer Service Officer codes the breach details via the Breach Details Summary (NBDS) screen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For automatic coding, go to Step 7. • For manual coding, go to Step 8.
7	<p style="text-align: center;">Automatic breaches</p> <p>Automatic breaches are a result of coding on the NJAT screen. This applies for job seekers, only. Suspension or cancellation of the job seeker's payment must be done manually via the Benefit Action (BA) screen.</p> <p>For more information on coding the NJAT screen, see Administrative breach reason codes. To code the NJAT screen select the relevant reason:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failed to comply with a requirement to attend a Centrelink office interview for Job seeker Diary (JSD) or DP Review (BFJ) • Failed to attend 12 week/9 month interview (BII) • Failed to return JSD (BJD). • Failed to reply to letters from Centrelink (reviews for JSD, IM or DPR) (BRM)
8	<p style="text-align: center;">Code a manual breach on system</p> <p>Note: IF a breach is to be imposed on a new claim, code via the new claim activity by selecting the breaches screen via NSS Task Selection (NTS) screen and complete it as part of the claim process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate to the Breach Details Summary (NBDS) screen; • Enter the actual date the breach occurred in the Breach Date: field; • Enter the code for the reason the breach, see Administrative beach reason codes incurred in the Breach Rsn: field; • Enter the date of determination of the breach in the Event Date: filed (normally today's date); • Complete the Source: and DOR: fields in the screen footer, and press [Enter]; • Result: The system defaults the correct values in the Breach Type; Breach Status; Start Date; End Date; and Redn%: fields. The details now display in the summary section of the screen. Other breach results differ for breaches on new claims or existing

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	<p>claims;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise activity via the Activity Result (AR) screen. If a customer is current, process suspension / cancellation, see Suspension or cancellation of payments when a breach is applied prior to finalising a breach.
9	<p>Record a DOC detailing the decision to impose a breach</p> <p>Documentation of your decision should be an accurate reflection of the assessment process you underwent in reaching your decision. This is particularly important in cases that may be subject to appeal. Both sides of any assessment need to be considered to come to a quality decision. Document each contact with the customer to ensure a complete and accurate record of events.</p>

Third Breach Alert Procedures

<i>Step</i>	Action
1	<p>Is a third <u>Activity Test</u> breach being considered for the job seeker which will result in a non-payment period?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes, go to Step 2 If no, this procedure does not apply. Action the breach according to normal procedures. See Determining Activity Test breaches for job seekers
2	<p>After initial investigation can the breach be applied?</p> <p>Ensure that the job seeker was not exempt from the Activity Test, that sufficient notification was provided, the letter was sent to the correct address and that the breach is otherwise appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes, go to Step 3. If no, do not apply breach. See Revoking a breach <p>Procedure ends here.</p>
3	<p>Investigate possible risk factors</p> <p>Access the job seeker's record in ISIS and IES and using the Third Breach task card, look for evidence of factors which indicate that the customer may be at risk of being unable to comply with the Activity Test.</p> <p>In addition to these factors, a job seeker who is under 18 with risk factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> family conflict or a lack of family support; substance abuse; unstable accommodation; mental illness; a history of State Care; truancy; criminal convictions; should be considered 'at risk'. For such job seekers who are under 18,

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	the keyword ' ATRISK ' should be added to the DOC recording the breach decision.
4	<p>Contact the job seeker</p> <p>If possible, phone the job seeker on the day of the breach recommendation to discuss the circumstances which have lead to the breach recommendation. If the job seeker cannot be phoned a letter should be sent asking them to contact to discuss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If contact is made with the job seeker, go to Step 5 • If contact is not made with the job seeker, go to Step 6
5	<p>Does the job seeker have a satisfactory explanation for not complying with the Activity Test?</p> <p>For example, the job seeker was working and can provide evidence or they were sick and can provide a medical certificate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, do not apply breach. See Revoking a breach. Also discuss any risk factors revealed and follow up any referrals which may be appropriate after talking to the job seeker. Procedure ends here. • If no, discuss any risk factors which were revealed using the 'Third Breach taskcard' with the job seeker. Go to Step 6
6	<p>Consult specialist officers</p> <p>w Discuss the application of the third Activity Test breach highlighting any apparent risk factors with the Social Worker, Occupational Psychologist or Centrelink Disability Officer (CDO) and also discuss possible intervention or assistance.</p> <p>w Make an appointment with the specialist if appropriate.</p>
7	<p>Action the breach</p> <p>Consider the opinions of specialist officers and other information obtained when determining the Activity Test breach.</p> <p>Record the decision and any action or intervention undertaken on a DOC.</p>

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Third Breach Alert Taskcard

3rd Breaches: Possible Risk Factors and how to identify them

Indicator	Screens	What to look for	What it MAY mean:	Possible Intervention Options
Lack of stable or adequate accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACS, ADH, DO, NIH, OCD (ISIS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Change of Addr • Changes to living arrangements • UTLAH claims • 3rd party address listed • Duplicate SU19s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job seeker is not getting letters etc reliably • Job seeker priority is to sort out living arrangements • Job seeker has no support system • Job seeker is homeless or itinerant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with SW/ISO • This may lead to a referral to a social worker for assessment/assistance.
Lack of income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACS, EANS, EBSM, OINS, NIS (ISIS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple EBTs • Frequency of other income/earnings • Percent of income in rent • Living arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job seeker is paying a high % of income in rent • Job seeker is unable to manage income • Job seeker has drug/alcohol dependency • Job seeker has no support system • Job seeker can't afford phone calls/transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with SW/OP/ISO • This may lead to a referral to a social worker for assessment/assistance
Some complexity in job seeker's circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACA, DL, OCD, HAL (ISIS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous appointments or contact with specialists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job seeker has known issues requiring specialist services • Specialist is already aware of issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with specialist already dealing with job seeker • This may lead to re-referral to a specialist for further assistance.
Ongoing medical issues, periods of incapacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DL, MCRS, NAT, SRS, OCD (ISIS) • JSCI, JODV (IES) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of ongoing medical condition • Lengthy periods of incap • Claims for other assistance • Specialist Emp Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job seeker is unable to comply with requirements because of medical issues • Job seeker not receiving correct benefit type • Job seeker's condition may have worsened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with OP/SW/ISO/CDO • This may lead to a referral to a specialist for further assistance. • Request for treating Dr report • Refer to CDO/OP for assessment
Literacy and/or Numeracy problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AQR, DL, LNRD, NAT, NBDS, OCD (ISIS) • JSCI (IES) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous Lit/Num referrals • JSCI Lit/Num indicators • Previous breaches for non-attendance • NESB / Indigenous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job seeker is unable to understand letters • Job seeker has limited understanding of obligations • Job seeker is an early school leaver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with OP • This may lead to a referral to a literacy and numeracy program or a referral to an OP for assessment.
Post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AQR, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous place of residence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job seeker has suffered torture/trauma in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with OP/SW

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Traumatic Stress Disorder	NBDS (ISIS) • JSCI (IES)	in country with human rights abuses	previous country of residence • Job seeker has fear of authority	• May lead to a referral to an OP for an assessment or a SW for assistance
Unreasonable or non-conventional behaviour	• DL, CACA, NBDS (ISIS) • JSCI (IES)	• Abusive or odd behaviour • Previous OP/SW ref/s • Previous breaches in a short period of time • Difficult to contact	• Job seeker may have mental health issues • Job seeker has limited understanding of obligations/requirements	• Discuss with OP/SW • This may lead to a referral to an OP for an assessment or to a social worker for assistance.

Determination of 3rd Breaches:

Job seekers who have been subject to two previous breach penalties and are facing a potential third breach penalty may have significant barriers to both social and economic participation. It is therefore Centrelink's responsibility to explore all possible options prior to determining such cases so that the imposition of a 3rd breach penalty is a last resort.

It is sometimes possible that a job seeker's failure to comply with their obligations is due to one or more factors which may be beyond her/his control. Job seekers will not always disclose these details to the CSO, so there is no specific record of issues readily available. However, in some situations, it is possible to identify potential risk factors by interrogating the ISIS and IES systems for information already held in these systems, and from local knowledge of the job seeker situation.

It is not solely the role of CSOs to determine outcomes for job seekers with complex personal issues. In these situations CSOs should consult with available specialists/professionals where appropriate, including:

- ◆ Social Workers
- ◆ Occupational Psychologists
- ◆ Indigenous Service Officers
- ◆ Centrelink Disability Officer (if there are medical conditions involved)

CSOs remain responsible for the breach decision and may decide independently not to impose penalties, however it is expected that for other cases, a specialist would be consulted and all alternatives explored PRIOR to a non-payment period penalty being imposed.

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Steps to take when determining a 3rd breach:

1. Interrogate ISIS/IES to ensure appropriate requirements have been met such as reasonable notice provided, notices sent to the correct address, job seeker was not exempt from the Activity Test etc. If initial investigation reveals a breach penalty is not appropriate do not impose the penalty, procedure ends here. If it appears a breach has occurred;
2. Contact the job seeker by phone if possible on Day 1. If not possible, send out letter requesting job seeker to contact;
3. Interrogate ISIS/IES for possible risk factors that may inhibit the job seeker's ability to comply with requirements (see reverse side). Discuss circumstances with the job seeker;
4. In the instance job seeker's explanation is NOT satisfactory, again consider risk factors (see reverse side) and consult with relevant specialist/professional to determine appropriate further intervention and/or decision.
5. If job seeker does NOT contact, again consider risk factors (see reverse side) and consult with appropriate specialist/professional to determine the appropriate decision and/or intervention to be made.

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Question No: 27

Topic: Medical Certificates

Hansard Page: C A28

Senator Denman asked:

Does the medical certificate, when seeking an activity test exemption, have to specify what the illness is?

Answer:

Yes. In order to have medical issues considered when making decision regarding activity test exemptions, the following information must be contained in the medical certificate:

- the medical practitioner's diagnosis (name or description of the condition);
- the medical practitioner's prognosis (guesstimate of duration of incapacity);
- that the person is incapacitated for work; and
- the period for which the person is incapacitated for work.

Of course this information is treated as absolutely confidential. This information is critical for Centrelink officers to make informed decisions and to ensure that any activity requirement is consistent with customers' capacity to comply.

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Question No: 1.1

Topic: The Efficiency Dividend p 246 of PBS

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senators Denman and Bishop asked:

Please describe the nature of each of the Efficiency Dividends itemised in table 2.3 (page 246)

Answer:

Centrelink is subject to 3 separate dividends each year.

The dividends comprise:

(a) a standard efficiency dividend of 1% of total running costs each year, applied to most Budget funded agencies;

(b) a special efficiency dividend, of 2.5% (\$38.1 million) of running costs in the first year building up to the equivalent of 10% (\$139.4 million) in running costs from 1999-2000. This has been applied in recognition of Centrelink's ability to remove duplication and streamline Government services previously provided by a range of Government departments; and

(c) an IT dividend (\$25 million) in recognition of efficiencies to be achieved through the consolidation and outsourcing of IT infrastructure.

The efficiency dividends are summarised by year and cumulatively in the following table:

(\$ million)	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06
Standard ED	-16	-31	-46	-61	-76	-91	-106	-121	-138
Special ED	-38.1	-59.2	-139.4	-139.4	-139.4	-139.4	-139.4	-139.4	-139.4
IT Dividend	0	-5.9	-25.4	-24.8	-24.8	-24.8	-24.8	-24.8	-24.8
Annual Total	-54.1	-96.1	-210.8	-225.2	-240.2	-255.2	-270.2	-285.2	-302.2

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Question No: 1.2 and 1.3

Topic: The Efficiency Dividend p 246 of PBS

Written question on notice

Senators Denman and Bishop asked:

Have the anticipated Efficiency Dividend savings been realised? If so what have been the main contributors to the savings? and
In what way has the Efficiency Dividend impacted on client services? What elements of rationalisation have impacted directly on customer services?

Answer: These questions are best answered collectively as follows.

Yes the Efficiency Dividend savings have been realised. Efficiency Dividends are applied in advance to Centrelink's revenue base. In simple terms the reductions are applied to Centrelink's known revenue and adjustments made to these figures leaving a 'net' revenue with which Centrelink is to work within.

The main contributors to the savings have been the continuation of productivity improvements being achieved through measures such as:

- Business process re-engineering – streamlining processes and reducing backlogs;
- 'Getting it Right' strategy – making the right decision first time and minimising re-work;
- Implementation of a range of capability projects eg. Call Centre Automation, Future Post, Centrelink On-Line.

Centrelink values its customers and is committed to providing exceptional service delivery to the Australian community. Customers have the opportunity to provide input to 'Value Creation' workshops, customer surveys, the national 1800 feedback line, and customer comment cards available at Customer Service Centres. Initiatives such as 'One Main Contact' and 'Life Events' allow a more personalised and accurate approach to service delivery.

Centrelink's customer satisfaction survey results have steadily improved.

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Question No: 2.1

Topic: Budgeted Statement p 252 of PBS

Written question on notice

Senator Denman asked:

Can a description be provided for Centrelink employee expenses eg: breakdown of salary, superannuation, redundancy?

Answer:

Employee expenses for 2001-02 comprised of the following items:

Item	\$'000
Salary	900,317
Superannuation	130,961
Accrued Leave Expenses	109,709
Worker's Compensation Premium	10,398
Other employee related expenses such as recruitment costs, early intervention, staff medicals, comsuper admin fees, remote leave locality allowance	12,603
Redundancy Payments	1,821
Total	1,165,809

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 2.2

Topic: Budgeted Statement p 252 of PBS

Written question on notice

Senators Denman and Bishop asked:

What is the current Centrelink staffing numbers (including breakdown of FT, PT and FT equivalent)?

Answer:

The following table shows Centrelink staffing numbers as at 31 May 2002. The data shows staff by three measures:

Staff Count: The number of people employed by Centrelink i.e. head count;

Full Time Equivalent: This count converts part time staff to a full time equivalent;

Average Staffing Level: This count is the same as FTE plus excludes staff on long term leave without pay. This is the count most commonly used in calculating salary expenses and affordability and is the methodology used in PBS.

Employee Group	Full Time	Part Time	Total
Staff Count	20,420	4,124	24,544
Full Time Equivalent	20,418	2,914	23,332
Average Staffing Level	19,962	2,769	22,730

Table 1: Centrelink staffing numbers by Full Time and Part Time categories

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Question No: 2.3

Topic: Budgeted Statement p 252 of PBS

Written question on notice

Senators Denman and Bishop asked:

**What is the estimated staffing for each of the forward estimates to 2005-06?
Have these estimates changed due to the latest Budget Measures?**

Answer:

The estimated staffing levels for forward years are shown in the following table:

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
ASL	22,833	22,758	22,878	22,347

Table 1: Forward year estimates of Centrelink ASL

These estimates are impacted by, and include, the 2002-03 Federal Budget ASL effects estimated in the following table.

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
ASL Impact	670	824	1,121	1,200

Table 2: Impact of 2002-03 Federal Budget on Centrelink's staffing levels

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Question No: 2.4

Topic: Budgeted Statement of p 252 of PBS

Written question on notice

Senators Denman and Bishop asked:

What are the normal ratios of staff to clients for each broad customer group (eg. employment v. retirement groups)?

Answer:

The detailed information referred to in the Senator's question is not available. To collect and assemble such information solely for the purpose of answering the question would be a major task and would involve detailed surveys. As a large proportion of Centrelink's customer service centre staff work across broad customer groups, especially in smaller offices, it is not possible to provide an estimated answer to the question.

However, Strategic Cost Management (SCM) is currently being developed within Centrelink and this will progressively increase available data over the next 12-18 months. The data will then be available to address this question on staff ratios to customer groups. Under SCM, staff and workload will be mapped to broad customer groupings (via Centrelink business lines e.g. Employment Services) and on a locational basis (via Centrelink Area regions e.g. Central and North Queensland).

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 2.5

Topic: Budgeted Statement p 252 of PBS

Written question on notice

Senators Denman and Bishop asked: Can the staff ratios for each broad customer group be provided for each Centrelink region?

Answer:

The detailed information referred to in the Senator's question is not available. To collect and assemble such information solely for the purpose of answering the question would be a major task and would involve detailed surveys. As a large proportion of Centrelink's customer service centre staff work across broad customer groups, especially in smaller offices, it is not possible to provide an estimated answer to the question.

However, Strategic Cost Management (SCM) is currently being developed within Centrelink and this will progressively increase available data over the next 12-18 months. The data will then be available to address this question on staff ratios to customer groups. Under SCM, staff and workload will be mapped to broad customer groupings (via Centrelink business lines e.g. Employment Services) and on a locational basis (via Centrelink Area regions e.g. Central and North Queensland).

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Question No: 2.6

Topic: Budgeted Statement p 252 of PBS

Written Question On Notice

Senator Denman asked:

What is the extent of any outstanding loans made to Centrelink (how much and what are they for)?

Answer:

- Centrelink only has the one loan current, that being with the Department of Finance and Administration (Finance).
- The loan balance is \$14,024,345.00.
- Loan was provided in the 1998-99 Financial Year to allow Centrelink to fund restructuring to meet the special efficiency dividends set by Government.

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Question No: 2.7

Topic: Budgeted Statement p 252 of PBS

Written Question On Notice

Senator Denman asked:

At what rate are the loans being re-paid ?

Answer:

- Centrelink entered the loan agreement with Department of Finance and Administration (Finance) in the 1998-99 Financial Year.
- The loan was provided on a principal and interest basis with repayments to be made quarterly.
- The agreement stated that the loan was to be repaid in total by 30 June 2004.
- Centrelink is able to make additional payments at any time but with no redraw facility available.
- Interest over the period of the loan is charged at 10 year long term bond rate effective on the last day of the quarter immediately preceding the quarter for which the interest is being calculated.
- Centrelink advised Finance on 4 June 2002 of its intention to repay the loan in full as at the end of the 2001-02 financial year.

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Question No: 5

Topic: The degree to which DEWR consulted Centrelink regarding the Job Seeker Satisfaction Survey

Hansard Page: CA6

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you just put on the record the degree of consultation that occurred with Centrelink in the prior (2001) survey, the survey that has been concluded.

Answer:

Centrelink believes that it was sufficiently consulted in the design of the 2001 Job Seeker Evaluation of Employment Services (Centrelink) Survey.

Centrelink was represented on the Survey Working Group from October 2000 by staff from both the Employment Services Community Segment and the Centrelink Surveys area. The Working Group examined the proposed questions, methodology and changes from previous surveys.

Centrelink was able to comment, propose alternative positions and questions and argue for or against types of questions and areas the questions may have covered. Centrelink believes that its representation on the working group influenced the final design.

Centrelink was aware of the attitudinal segmentation questions that were added to the end of the survey. It soon became apparent that they related to DEWR's work and may inform policy but were not relevant to Centrelink's work. Therefore Centrelink gave these questions no further consideration.

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Question No: 6

Topic: Centrelink's views of the questions in the Job Seekers Satisfaction Survey relating to the work performance of Centrelink Officers.

Hansard Page: CA 8

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you provide any comments or criticisms that go to the utility and the satisfaction that Centrelink has with the questions that are asked in that survey (Job Seekers Satisfaction) by the other departments of the work performance of its officers.

Answer:

The most important question asked, which acts as Centrelink Key Performance Indicator 1, is *"Thinking now about all aspects of the employment services provided by Centrelink, would you say that overall you were satisfied or dissatisfied?"*

Centrelink has no problems with that question. Under the purchaser/provider arrangements Centrelink expects to be held accountable for its performance and customer satisfaction is clearly an important aspect of performance. Overall, the results showed that Centrelink is a high performing organization. Centrelink achieved the benchmark of having 80% of customers satisfied with overall employment services.

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Question No: 181

Topic: Consultation Between DEWR and Centrelink regarding the JSCI

Hansard Page: CA 8

Senator Collins asked:

Could I ask Mr Fegan to take on notice whether the nature of consultation with DEWR covered the JSCI index and the extent to which Centrelink was satisfied with the manner in which DEWR was going to be testing questions about that index.

Answer:

There were no questions in the survey that referred to the JSCI.

The Senator's question may refer to the level of consultation that occurred in the formulation of the questions asked in the JSCI. The original questions contained in the JSCI were formulated in 1996. Centrelink did not exist in 1996 and had no input or influence on those questions. However, DEWR revised some of the questions asked in the JSCI in 2001. Centrelink was able to be a part of that process and was involved in the formulation of the revised questions.

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Question No: 182

Topic: DEWR 2001 Job Seeker Evaluation of Employment Services (Centrelink)

Survey

Hansard Page: CA 4/5

Senator Bishop asked:

Can Centrelink provide the Committee with a copy of the latest job seeker satisfaction survey (in regards to the DEWR 2001 Job Seeker Evaluation of Employment Services (Centrelink) Survey.

Answer:

A copy of the DEWR 2001 Job Seeker Evaluation of Employment Services (Centrelink) Survey questionnaire is attached.

[Note: attachments have not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

Note: QON answer and attachment provided by DEWR 1 August 2002.

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Question No: 7

Topic: Privacy

Hansard Page: CA 9

Senator Bishop asked:

Since the last estimates round, how many privacy breaches have there been since last February? Can you describe the more significant of those without identifying individuals? And provide the monthly figures until now.

Answer:

From 21 February 2002 until 31 May 2002 there have been 98 breaches. A break down of these incidents is as follows:

- 41 misdirected mail incidents. These incidents involve letters or faxes containing personal information being sent to the wrong person due to office error,
- 38 unauthorised access to, use or disclosure of personal information. These incidents include incidents where the use or disclosure was inadvertent;
- 7 mail house errors. These incidents involve letters containing personal information being sent to the wrong person by a contracted mail house;
- 8 storage and/or security incidents;
- 3 incidents involving collection of personal information; and
- 1 incident involving a member of the public endeavouring to solicit protected information from Centrelink.

The monthly figures are as follows:

21 February - 28 February 2002 *since last estimates =	9
01 March - 31 March 2002 =	32
01 April - 30 April 2002 =	18
01 May - 31 May 2002 =	39

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Question No: 8

Topic: Privacy

Hansard Page: CA 9

Senator Bishop asked:

How many of these breaches have been referred to the Privacy Commissioner? Of the three mentioned, can you run through the nature of the problem, the nature of customers affected and where we are at in terms of resolution?

Answer:

Centrelink did not refer any cases to the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner during this period. Complaints are generally resolved within Centrelink. However, if an individual is not happy with an investigation they may take the matter to the OFPC. Some individuals will lodge a complaint with the OFPC without speaking with Centrelink first. Between the dates 21 February 2002 and 31 May 2002 the OFPC referred 3 cases to Centrelink. These are cases 9 - 11 as referred to in Question 9. (CA10)

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Question No: 9

Topic: Privacy

Hansard Page: CA 9

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you provide me the factual situation of the 10 open cases still with the Privacy Commissioner? Just the facts, who you consulted, where they are at.

Answer:

1. Information about the financial situation of a customer was disclosed by a Centrelink employee to the customer's ex wife. Legal proceedings between the couple then ensued. The customer complained to the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner (OFPC) and is seeking compensation. Centrelink is acting on legal advice in order to finalise the matter.
2. A Centrelink Customer Service Office (CSO) accepted that the flatmate of a customer was acting with the customer's authority therefore discussed limited personal information about the customer's situation with the flatmate. The flatmate was concerned about the customer's welfare. The customer complained to the OFPC and that office formed a preliminary view that Centrelink had breached Information Privacy Principle (IPP) 11. Centrelink apologised to the customer and the customer is seeking compensation. Centrelink is liaising with the OFPC in order to finalise the matter.
3. During the process of investigating a tip-off, Centrelink sought information from a financial institution about a customer. The customer claimed that Centrelink was not entitled to collect information however Centrelink maintains the collection of information from the financial institution was relevant and lawful. After taking the matter to the OFPC the customer progressed the matter to the Federal Court. The matter was deferred back to the OFPC and the customer is seeking an amount of compensation. Centrelink is awaiting contact from the OFPC in order to finalise the matter.
4. A State Government Department suspected a relative of a Centrelink customer of fraud. They approached Centrelink employees for information about the Centrelink customer who was also implicated in the alleged fraud. The Centrelink employees, who were not authorised to release the information, provided it to that department. However, had an approach been made to a Centrelink Officer with the appropriate delegation, the information would have been released to the Housing Authority under an '*order to protect the public revenue*' authority. Centrelink is liaising with the OFPC in order to finalise the matter.
5. A member of the public ran a course which, they purported, was eligible to attract Commonwealth payments to the participants. This was not the case and consequently

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Centrelink took measures to prosecute the course vendor and was seeking a reparation order for a large sum of money. However, during the process, information was collected by Centrelink which was not relevant to these proceedings. The OFPC formed a preliminary view that Centrelink that was in breach of IPPs 1 and 3. Centrelink is responding to the OFPC.

6. Information about the medical condition of a Centrelink customer was disclosed to a Job Network Member (JNM) without the consent of the customer. The information was inadvertently provided to the JNM via the electronic interface with the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business. Centrelink apologised to the customer and removed the information from the customer record. Centrelink is awaiting a response from the OFPC.
7. An unsuccessful job applicant approached the OFPC with claims that their personal information was used inappropriately during the selection process. Centrelink is investigating the incident and is preparing a response to the OFPC.
8. This incident involves a customer who is questioning the accuracy of data received by Centrelink from the Australian Taxation Office as a result of a data match. A Centrelink Privacy Officer is investigating the complaint before a response is compiled for the OFPC.
9. In order to facilitate a more efficient customer service, a customer was approached by a Customer Service Officer (CSO) in the waiting area. The incident involved the police being called and later the customer claimed their privacy was breached as others in the waiting area may have overheard the conversation. Centrelink has responded to the OFPC.
10. The OFPC has commenced an investigation into an alleged disclosure of protected information to the media. It appears from investigations so far, that although approached by the media, Centrelink has not disclosed information to them.
11. (This case was received by Centrelink on 3 June, therefore was not included in the 10 cases with the OFPC at the time the report was compiled for Estimates) A customer complained that details of his income was disclosed to his partner. Centrelink is investigating the matter.

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Question No: 10

Topic: Indigenous Centrelink Customers – Activity Test Arrangements

Hansard Page: CA 12

Senator Bishop asked:

Do you have a break-up of the figures for indigenous people in the various states and territories who are not activity tested, as opposed to those who are activity tested?

Answer:

TABLE 1: NEWSTART AND YOUTH ALLOWANCE ACTIVITY TESTED REGISTERED JOBSEEKERS AT 19 MAY 2002*

STATE / TERRITORY	INDIGENOUS JOBSEEKERS	NON-INDIGENOUS JOBSEEKERS	TOTAL
Northern Territory	8,306	5,703	14,009
Queensland	12,841	198,052	210,893
New South Wales	11,781	292,548	304,329
South Australia	2,280	81,028	83,308
Western Australia	7,068	93,119	100,187
Tasmania	1,282	31,915	33,197
Victoria	2,163	239,518	241,681
ACT	184	11,599	11,783
TOTAL	45,905	953,482	999,387

* Does include CDEP participants in receipt of CDEP Participation Supplement (CPS).

TABLE 2: NEWSTART AND YOUTH ALLOWANCE NON-ACTIVITY TESTED REGISTERED JOBSEEKERS AT 19 MAY 2002

STATE / TERRITORY	INDIGENOUS JOBSEEKERS	NON-INDIGENOUS JOBSEEKERS	TOTAL
Northern Territory	4,962	334	5,296
Queensland	1,032	10,211	11,243
New South Wales	740	12,546	13,286
South Australia	187	4,227	4,414
Western Australia	794	4,682	5,476
Tasmania	90	1,831	1,921
Victoria	122	9,404	9,526
ACT	12	533	545
TOTAL	7,939	43,768	51,707

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 11

Topic: Remote Indigenous Centrelink Customers

Hansard Page: CA 13

Senator Bishop asked:

How many indigenous customers would you have in the Northern Territory outside those five or six named urban areas? Provide the number of customers by each remote geographic location.

Answer:

TABLE 1: INDIGENOUS JOBSEEKERS REGISTERED AS REMOTE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY AT 12 JUNE 2002

CENTRELINK REGION	NEWSTART	YOUTH ALLOWANCE
Alice Springs Remote	1,311	222
Katherine Remote	1,007	176
Top End Remote	2,784	561
Tennant Creek Remote	371	68
Nhulunbuy Remote	592	48
TOTAL	6,065	1,075

TABLE 2: INDIGENOUS NON-JOBSEEKERS REGISTERED AS REMOTE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY AT 12 JUNE

CENTRELINK REGION	AGE PENSION	DISABILITY PENSION	FAMILY PAYMENTS	PARENTING PAYMENTS	ABSTUDY
Alice Springs Remote	377	208	723	387	434
Katherine Remote	203	125	1,270	346	269
Top End Remote	262	261	3,311	1,259	589
Tennant Creek Remote	49	39	418	171	41
Nhulunbuy Remote	51	107	888	405	37
TOTAL	942	740	6,610	2,568	1,370

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 12

Topic: Breaches – Centrelink Customers in the Northern Territory

Hansard Page: CA 13

Senator Bishop asked:

Do you know how many breaches in the Northern Territory are related to failure to attend an interview or appointment within the 90 minutes designated appointment time? Please provide the information in numbers and in percentage terms, broken up by whatever geographical regional areas are for the entire Northern Territory.

Answer:

There is no rule relating to failure to attend an interview or appointment within the 90 minutes designated appointment time. Hence there are no related breaches.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 13

Topic: Breaches – Centrelink Customers in the Northern Territory

Hansard Page: CA 15

Senator Bishop asked:

What are the new flexibilities or authorities (breaching regime) that have been given to line officers to take account of the particular situations; when those new flexibilities are introduced; and any review, analysis or evaluation that has been done as to the effectiveness of those new measures?

Answer:

There are flexibilities built into the breaching regime to allow officers discretion when considering breach penalties. However, these flexibilities are not new. In the Northern Territory and other regions with high Indigenous populations, strategies were developed where an Indigenous customer service officer, where necessary, would be included to ensure that cultural and family obligation issues are considered in the breach process.

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Output Group:

Question No: 14

Topic: Indigenous Call, Centrelink

Hansard Page: CA 17

Senator Bishop asked:

What are the hours that the call centre is operational; the numbers of staff at any given time, the number of languages or dialects that covers that are spoken in the Northern Territory?

Answer:

Centrelink has an Indigenous Call Centre network that provides telephone services primarily to Indigenous customers living in remote and rural areas of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland, including the Torres Strait Islands.

The Indigenous Call Centre network has three sites. These are located in Darwin (NT), Cairns (QLD) and Kalgoorlie (WA). The hours of operation are from 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday.

There are 37 full-time positions within the Indigenous Call Centre network of which 95% are filled by Indigenous staff.

Staff within the Indigenous Call Centre network are provided with training to enable them to communicate effectively and sensitively with Indigenous customers. Communication skills training includes: questioning techniques – how to phrase questions appropriately; use and understanding of terminology used by customers.

The Indigenous Call Centre network caters for those Indigenous communities that speak or understand a version of Pigeon English or Creole. Community Agents are also utilised regularly to interpret customer enquiries in local languages. Indigenous interpreters are also utilised by Centrelink Customer Service Centres (CSCs), as required.

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Question No: 15

Topic: Community Agent Program

Hansard Page: CA 17

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you provide the details of the formula which is based around community populations?

Answer:

Centrelink administers the Community Agent Program on behalf of the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), under a Business Partnership Agreement. The guidelines for the Community Agent Program (CAP) provide standard remuneration for contracted host organisations delivering Community Agent services. This comprises of an hourly fee rate and an administrative amount.

The formula for the calculation of the hourly fee portion is based on the total population of the community receiving Community Agent services. For each 250 people or part thereof, the contracted host organisation is funded for 5 hours of activity, with exception of the 250 people, for which 10 hours funding is provided. A maximum of 40 hours applies.

TABLE 1: COMMUNITY AGENT PROGRAM – HOURLY FEE FRAMEWORK

COMMUNITY POPULATION	HOURLY FUNDING PER WEEK
> 250 people	10
251 – 500 people	15
501 – 750 people	20
751 – 1,000 people	25
1,001 – 1,250 people	30
1,251 – 1,500 people	35
1,501 < people	40

The hours of activity are currently remunerated at a set rate. In addition to the hourly fee calculation, a recurrent flat rate contribution is added towards the cost of administrative expenses. The hourly fee rate and administrative amounts are paid quarterly.

There will be improvements to these arrangements with the implementation of the Integrated Centrelink Agent and Access Point servicing model on 1 July 2002.

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Question No: 16

Topic: Integrated Centrelink Agent and Access Point Servicing Model

Hansard Page: CA 17

Senator Bishop asked:

Could you provide a package of documentation that outlines the new programs, the new guidelines, the costings of the Community Agent Program?

Answer:

As part of Centrelink's commitment to improving access to, and quality of, Centrelink services to rural, regional and remote Australia, a network of Agents and Access Points have been established across Australia. There are presently two programs that govern these arrangements.

These two programs will amalgamate on 1 July 2002, providing an integrated Centrelink Agent and Access Point servicing model. The model will provide three discrete access channels, these are:

- w **Access Point:** Self help facility to assist customers transact necessary business with Centrelink: information products; telephone facility with dedicated Call Centre links; and facsimile and photocopy facilities for forwarding documentation to host a CSC for processing.
- w **Agent (Basic):** In addition to self help facilities, an Agent (Basic) provides a face to face brokerage service to the community including: responding to basic customer inquiries and providing assistance, guidance and /or referral to specialist and other staff; identifying possible payment type/s for customers; and accepting claim forms and other documents required by Centrelink.
- w **Agent (Standard):** In addition to the services provided by an Agent (Basic), an Agent (Standard) responds to more complex inquiries and offer a more comprehensive service.

The new servicing model will produce a number of business improvements to better meet the needs of customers living in rural, regional and remote Australia. A national framework with a set of key principles and standards has also been established to govern business functions, remuneration, I&T and office equipment, training, performance measurement and monitoring.

Guidelines with all necessary information are being prepared for Centrelink staff to assist them with the implementation of the new servicing arrangements. Remuneration rates are set in accordance with market rates.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 17

Topic: Centrelink Visiting Services

Hansard Page: CA 17/19

Senator Bishop asked:

How often do field officers visit communities with a Centrelink Agent? Can you provide the routine? What are the sorts of principles that you would be using in terms of accommodation of your Agent?

Answer:

Centrelink visits to Indigenous communities with a Centrelink Agent range from four to 12 weeks or as the need arises. In the Top End of the Northern Territory, there is a minimum standard that communities are visited every four weeks. This may vary depending on weather conditions that may affect access.

Provision of appropriate and secure accommodation for Community Agents is the responsibility of the contracted host organisation.

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Question No: 18

Topic: Centrelink Access Points in the Northern Territory

Hansard Page: CA 19

Senator Bishop asked:

Do you have a list of where those 17 Access Points and locations in the Northern Territory are? How are those discussions regarding Access Points initiated and come about? What was the resolution on the level of service? What does an Area Manager take into account? Whether the majority of people in a given community speak English before funding Access Point self-help facilities is taken into account?

Answer:

As a result of a Centrelink Area led initiative to improve remote Indigenous communities access to Centrelink payments and services, 17 locations were identified for the establishment of a Centrelink Access Point. These were:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|-----|----------------|
| 1. | Adelaide River | 10. | Milikapiti |
| 2. | Alyangula* | 11. | Mount Allen |
| 3. | Ammonguna | 12. | Pine Creek |
| 4. | Atitjere | 13. | Pipalyatjara |
| 5. | Batchelor | 14. | Pirlangimpi |
| 6. | Belyuen | 15. | Robinson River |
| 7. | Duck Creek | 16. | Willowra |
| 8. | Humpty Doo | 17. | Wadeye* |
| 9. | Jabiru* | | |

Factors taken into account in determining the above locations included, the:

- distance from the nearest Community Agent;
- size and anticipated growth of the population;
- Centrelink customer numbers and anticipated business levels;
- geographical area/location;
- availability of suitable business/s with experience in the delivery of 'human services';
- level of infrastructure;
- level of support provided by other government agencies; and the
- potential/need to establish links with the community.

w Centrelink Access Points are self-help facilities to assist customers transact necessary business with Centrelink. Including: provision of information products; telephone facility with dedicated Call Centre links; and facsimile and photocopy facilities for forwarding documentation to the nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre (CSC) for processing.

* Non operational

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Output Group:

Question No: 32

Topic: Contractual Arrangements - Centrelink Agent and Access Points

Hansard Page: CA 88

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you provide, with details of the provision contained in the contracts, for Centrelink Agents in the Northern Territory. I presume they are standard form contracts. If they are standard contracts please provide a copy of the contract. If there are different contracts for each Agent, please provide the details of each contract.

Answer:

1. Yes. I am able to provide details of the provisions contained in contracts for Centrelink Agents and Access Points in the Northern Territory.

2. The contracts are standard form contracts. There are no differences of substance for each agent. There are three such standard contracts:

- A) Access Point,
- B) Agent (Basic), and
- C) Agent (Standard).

[Note: attachments have not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

3. Copies of the standard contracts are provided which do not include the following information:

- A) Clauses 1 and 2 of Schedule 2 - Fees, Allowances and Centreline's Contract Manager, and
- B) Attachment A Tax Invoice.

Publishing this information may adversely affect the market testing for delivery of services by a Commonwealth agency which currently uses Centrelink as its service provider. This would occur where the cost of service delivery by Centrelink were known so that there was no commercial imperative for competitors to Centrelink to submit substantially more competitive bids. This could deprive the Commonwealth of costs savings

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 19

Topic: Centrelink Rural & Remote Customers – Population Breakdown

Hansard Page: CA 20

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you provide a research run on population breakdowns in rural and remote communities for Indigenous customers?

Answer:

TABLE 1: CENTRELINK CUSTOMERS REGISTERED AS REMOTE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY AT 12 JUNE 2002

CENTRELINK REGION	JOBSEEKERS	NON-JOBSEEKERS	TOTAL
Alice Springs Remote	1,533	2,129	3,662
Katherine Remote	1,183	2,213	3,396
Top End Remote	3,345	5,682	9,027
Tennant Creek Remote	439	718	1,157
Nhulunbuy Remote	640	1,488	2,128
TOTAL	7,140	12,230	19,370

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 20

Topic: Formative Evaluation – Maningrida Remote Service Delivery Pilot

Hansard Page: CA 21

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you provide the evaluation report on the Maningrida remote service centre pilot?

Answer:

Centrelink is conducting a formative evaluation of two pilots of alternate service delivery for remote Indigenous customers in Maningrida (NT) and Palm Island (QLD). The evaluation will provide Centrelink with an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of these pilot arrangements in meeting business requirements and the needs of customers in remote Indigenous communities. The evaluation will also identify possible implications for the development and implementation of the *Australian's Working Together* 2001/02 Budget initiative, Remote Area Service Centres (RASCs).

Research including site visits and analysis of related documentation has now been completed. The evaluation report is presently being finalised. An executive summary for public release is expected to be completed in August 2002, at which time, a copy will be provided to Senator Bishop.

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Question No: 22

Topic: Remote Communities Report

Hansard Page: CA 25

Senator McLucas asked:

Can you provide a copy of the Remote Communities Report and the findings that came out of it?

Answer:

Please refer to the attached document – ‘Remote Communities Report: Overview’.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 21

Topic: ABSTUDY Recipients in Cape York

Hansard Page: CA24

Senator McLucas asked: What is the number of potential ABSTUDY recipients in Far North Queensland?

Answer: The question asked by Senator McLucas refers to potential customer figures. The Department of Education, Science and Training and State Education Queensland would be best placed to forecast the number of potential ABSTUDY recipients in Far North Queensland.

Senator McLucas asked: Can you provide a break down by community, both in the Torres Straits and on Cape York?

Answer: The question asked by Senator McLucas refers to the breakdown of potential ABSTUDY recipients by community in Far North Queensland. As such, the Department of Education, Science and Training and State Education Queensland would be best placed to forecast the number of potential ABSTUDY recipients in communities in Far North Queensland.

Senator McLucas asked: Can you provide data on the number of ABSTUDY applications Centrelink received in January, February and March of this year?

Answer: The following data shows the number of ABSTUDY claims that were registered in January, February and March of this year and which had a home address in Cape York or the Torres Straits.

Provided for Cape York (including Yarrabah) and the Torres Straits.

	Cape York (includes Yarrabah)	Torres Straits
Jan 2002	139	159
Feb 2002	94	140
Mar 2002	81	74
Total	314	Total 373

Senator McLucas asked: How many were received prior to 26 January, which was day one of school in Queensland and how many were received after that date?

Answer: The following shows the number of ABSTUDY claims that were registered with Centrelink and had a home address in Cape York or the Torres Straits, from 1 December 2001 to 25 January 2002 and from 26 January 2002 to 30 April 2002.

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Provided for Cape York and the Torres Straits.

	Cape York (includes Yarrabah)		Torres Straits
1 Dec - 25 Jan	123		160
26 Jan - 31 Jan	19		28
Subtotal	142	Subtotal	188
1 Feb - 28 Feb	94		140
1 Mar - 31 Mar	81		74
1 Apr - 30 Apr	83		67
Subtotal	258	Subtotal	281
Total	400	Total	469

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 23

Topic: ABSTUDY Recipients in Cape York

Hansard Page: CA 26

Senator McLucas asked: Does Centrelink know how many children there are in Cape York or the Torres Straits who are not attending secondary school?

Answer: The Department of Education, Science and Training would be best placed to provide a response to the Senator's question.

Senator McLucas asked: What is the number of children who finally ended up as ABSTUDY recipients somewhere around March or April who did not start school on day one of the school this year?

Answer: It is only possible from Centrelink data to provide the number of students who were granted ABSTUDY in March and April 2002. The data does not provide the date the student started school. The Client Department requirement is that Centrelink ensures the student is enrolled at a school.

There are a number of issues which affect when a student commences school including:

- some students start late due to late parental lodgement or parental enrolment of child at a school;
- in some cases it has been found that parents wait until a position becomes vacant particularly if another relative is enrolled at that school;
- there have also been some problems when schools request an enrolment fee (or deposit) with some parents being unable to make the payment and therefore losing their position with that school and having to enroll in another school; and
- the weather and resulting transport difficulties can also cause delays.

It should also be noted that some students may already be at school where the school is located in the community or where the parents have made their own arrangements to have their children live with relatives who reside close to the chosen school.

The number of students who were granted ABSTUDY in March and April 2002 and had a home address in Cape York or the Torres Straits.

	Cape York (includes Yarrabah)	Torres Straits
March 2002	86	91
April 2002	83	60
Total	169	151

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 24

Topic: ABSTUDY Recipients in Cape York

Hansard Page: CA 26

Senator McLucas asked: How is the training provided to agency staff going to be delivered?

Answer: Centrelink Agents are provided with twice yearly training at the parent Centrelink Customer Service Centre (CSC). The new National Agent Training Package covers broader program payments which includes ABSTUDY. Training is delivered by accredited Centrelink trainers. Training is also conducted informally when Centrelink staff visit the Agent at the community.

Centrelink ABSTUDY staff have Individual Learning Plans which are reviewed regularly as part of the staff member's Performance Assessment which is conducted with their Team Leader. Training is on-going via a number of training mediums (formal, on the job, electronic reference tools and the Centrelink Education Network).

Senator McLucas asked: Have there been any staffing cuts in either the Indigenous unit in the Cairns office or the TI office over the last two years?

Answer: As the ABSTUDY funding allocation (see following question) indicates there have not been staff cuts or reductions for either the Cairns ABSTUDY Team or the Thursday Island CSC over the last two years. Some ABSTUDY processing functions were centralised from the Thursday Is CSC to the Cairns ABSTUDY Team enabling the Thursday Is CSC staff to better focus on improving the relationships with families, communities and the schools.

Senator McLucas asked: What is the budget allocation to both of those two Indigenous units over the last three years?

Answer: The ABSTUDY funding allocation (full accrual) for the preceding three years is as follows:

1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002
\$377,447	\$466,733	\$683,280

The 2001/2002 funding increase was as a result of the Central and Northern Queensland Area centralising the ABSTUDY travel function with the Cairns ABSTUDY Team.

Senator McLucas asked: Is Centrelink looking at any way of increasing the staff component at either the TI or Cairns Offices?

Answer: The Area is currently in the process of determining its budgets for the next financial year. There will be additional resources as a result of the Australians Working Together Budget initiative.

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Output Group: Centrelink

Question No: 25

Topic: ABSTUDY Recipients in Cape York

Hansard Page: CA 27

Senator McLucas asked: Could you provide information on the case management approach?

Answer: Centrelink is actively looking at developing closer working relationships with key stakeholders including State Education Queensland and the Client department responsible for ABSTUDY policy, the Department of Education, Science and Training to ensure improved outcomes for school attendance. The Cairns ABSTUDY Team, in conjunction with the Thursday Island CSC staff, is looking at more effective ways to collaboratively administer the ABSTUDY Program with the Cape York and Torres Straits communities, families and schools. As a closer working relationship is developed it is expected that roles and responsibilities of respective stakeholders will be more clearly defined and articulated in improving educational outcomes in the Cape York and Torres Strait regions.

In developing this approach Centrelink recently met the school principals of the Cape and the Torres Straits and together are working on identifying a range of servicing strategies, including a case management approach for communities in the region. Other initiatives will include improving the promotion of ABSTUDY and more effective processes around claims and travel. These strategies will be worked through with the schools, families and communities. One such strategy will be that individual ABSTUDY Team members will have specific communities and schools with which they will become the key point of contact for any issues.

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Output Group: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Question No: 171

Topic: Page 274 of PBS

Hansard Page: CA 133

Senator Bishop asked:

Referring to page 274 of PBS for 2001-02, Table 3.1. Was there a reduction in funding from the government? What is the reason for the difference

Answer:

The figures relate to two separate years.

The budget estimates for “revenue from government” 2001-2002 were \$3,709,000.

Final estimates for “revenue from government” 2000-2001 were \$3,448,000.

This is an increase of \$261,000, comprising: Comcover supplementation; adjustment to the capital use charge; and indexation.

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Output Group: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Question No.172

Topic:

Hansard Page: CA134 Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

On page 270 of this year's PBS, can you provide a line break-up of the composition of \$6,787,000 (sales of goods and services) for each of the contracts and amounts, as when it is due and payable?

Answer:

Sales of Goods and Services

Contracts	(\$,000)	(\$,000)
Longitudinal Study of Australian Children	4,383	
National Child Protection Clearinghouse	294	
Stronger Families Learning Exchange	1,440	
New Commonwealth contracts (est)	275	
New non-Commonwealth contracts (est)	75	
		6,467
Other		
Family Matters subscriptions	100	
Other publications sales	20	
Royalties	50	
Conferences	150	
		320
Total		6,787

Contract Payments

Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*	
October 2002	\$11,000
November 2002	\$42,862
December 2002	\$115,500
January 2003	\$220,000
February 2003	\$550,000
March 2003	\$572,000
April 2003	\$642,565
June 2003	\$2,530,000
Total	\$4,683,927

As per the LSAC contract signed 21 March 2002. PBS figures submitted earlier.

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National Child Protection Clearinghouse	
September 2002	\$73,453
December 2002	\$73,453
March 2002	\$73,453
June 2002	\$73,453
Total	\$293,812

Stronger Families Learning Exchange	
September 2002	\$100,000
December 2002	\$100,000
March 2002	\$100,000
June 2002	\$100,000
Ad hoc payments*	\$1,040,000
Total	\$1,440,000

*Note: Estimate based on provision of support to 26 projects funded at \$40,000 per project.

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Output Group: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Question No:173

Topic:

Hansard Page: CA134 Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

The 'revenue from government' and 'sales of goods and services' amount to almost \$10.5 million of your \$10.58 million. Can you tell me how much of that \$10.5 million in the first two lines is coming from government? Could you also provide the total value and the source of funding from all non-government revenue, excluding interest?

Answer:

Of the \$10,488,000 in the first two lines, \$10,093,000 is from the Commonwealth and estimated \$75,000 from other contractors.

Non-commonwealth revenues(excluding interest) 2002-2003

Revenue source	(\$,000)
New non-Commonwealth contracts (est)	75
Family Matters subscriptions	100
Other publications sales	20
Royalties	50
Conferences	150
Other	50
Total	445

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Output Group: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Question No: 174

Topic:

Hansard Page: CA135 Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide the details of who would appoint members of the board of management?

Answer:

Members of the Board are appointed by the Governor General under S114C of the *Family Law Act 1975*.

The Minister may appoint a member to be the Presiding Member of the Board under regulation 3 of the *Family Law (Australian Institute of Family Studies) Regulations*.

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Output Group: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Question No: 175

Topic: Non-clearing house projects

Hansard Page: CA 138

Senator Bishop asked:

In relation to the non-clearinghouse projects, can you provide copies of reports from projects in Program A in the last two years and can you provide an outline of the research projects being undertaken in this program area in the next two years?

Answer:

Copies of the following publications were provided:

Reports:

Parenting in Australian families: a comparative study of Anglo, Torres Strait Islander, and Vietnamese communities by Violet Kolar and Grace Soriano, Research report no.5, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2000

Pathways from infancy to adolescence: Australian Temperament Project 1983-2000 by Margot Prior, Ann Sanson, Diana Smart and Frank Oberklaid, Research report no.4, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2000

Family and work : the family's perspective by Virginia Lewis, Jacqueline Tudball and Kelly Hand. Australia Dept. of Family and Community Services, 2001.

The UK Children in Need approach in Australia: A report to the Financial Markets Foundation for Children of the Victorian Feasibility Study of the UK Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, by Sarah Wise, Report prepared with University of Melbourne Department of Social Work and Anglicare Victoria 2001

The role of families in the development, identification, prevention and treatment of illicit drug problems – A literature review, Report to the National Illicit Drug Strategy Research Working Group and the National Health and Medical Research Council. Mitchell, P., Spooner, C., Vimpani, G., Copeland, J., Toumbourou, J., Sanson, A., and Howard, J. (2001),

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Research Papers

Child care in cultural context: issues for new research by Sarah Wise and Ann Sanson, Research paper no.22, Australian Institute of Family Studies, December 2000

Australian Family Briefing

How should family services respond to 'Children in Need'? by Sarah Wise, Australian Family Briefing no.11, October 2001

Family Matters articles

Family Matters, no.59 Winter 2001 – whole edition focussed on research on children in their family contexts.

“The development of civic mindedness in Australian adolescents”, Smart, D., Sanson, A., da Silva, L. and Toumbourou, J. (2000), *Family Matters*, no.57

“Meeting the challenges of parenting”, Soriano, G., Weston, R. and Kolar, V. (2001), *Family Matters*, no.58

“Children and parenting: the past hundred years”, Sanson, A. and Wise, S., (2001) *Family Matters*, no.60

“Parents' expectations, values and choice of child care: connections to culture” Wise, S., (2002) *Family Matters*, no.61

“Fathers' views on family life and paid work”, Hand, K. and Lewis V. (2002), *Family Matters*, no.61

Program outputs not included here but reported in the Annual Report include conference and seminar papers and presentations, chapters in non-Institute published books, and articles in external journals.

Outline of research planned for Children and Parenting Program in 2002-2005.

Childcare in cultural context

This ongoing study focuses on how childcare services affect the development of children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Little is known about the impact on children and families from diverse backgrounds of childcare that matches or does not match reflects the practices and values of the home. Understanding parent preferences and children's responses to these types of care is likely to have implications for both the provision of childcare and the wellbeing of the children concerned. Is more needed on the study itself? E.g. The study is gathering data on children from anglo-Aust, Viet and Somali backgrounds, and their parents and caregivers

The Australian Temperament Project

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The ATP is a large longitudinal study of children's development that began in 1983 with the enrolment of a representative sample of over 2,000 infants and their families from rural and urban Victoria. The study investigates pathways to psychosocial adjustment across childhood and adolescence, and the influence of personal, familial and environmental factors. Since early in 2000, the Institute has housed this ongoing research project, and is in collaboration with researchers from the University of Melbourne and the Royal Children's Hospital in developing it. Currently the project is focussing on a broad range of outcomes among young adult participants, including a collaboration with Crime Prevention Victoria to study pathways to antisocial and criminal behaviour.

Multiple and changeable childcare

This new longitudinal study examines childcare contexts that may pose risks for child development. Managed by a consortium comprising the Institute, Macquarie and Charles Sturt Universities and the NSW Office of Childcare, and funded through the ARC Linkage Grant scheme, the study is examining the effects of multiple and changeable care arrangements on children's development up to school age.

Development in diverse families

This new Institute study should enhance understanding about how family structure (the number of parents present in the household, parents' marital status and parents' sexual orientation) influences children's adjustment compared with the nature and quality of relationships within the family system. Over 2000 families with primary school aged children will take part in the study. Information about family history and many factors outside of the home such as support systems and work-related variables will also be collected.

Future areas for research

Other potential areas for research include:

- . whether childcare can take on an early intervention role, by investing in the learning and development of disadvantaged children and providing support to their parents
- . the impact of family and community poverty on children's outcomes and how institutions and community-based support structures can provide a protective buffer to families in these contexts.
- . the range of care and childrearing responsibilities in different family types, and how they are fulfilled.
- . a national stocktake of parenting education programs and comprehensive evaluation of their capacity to enable parents to fulfil their roles more successfully.
- . how technological advances, such as new forms of communication including the Internet, and assisted reproductive technologies including donor insemination and in vitro fertilisation, are changing family patterns of interaction and functioning, and potentially children's developmental outcomes.

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Output Group: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Question No: 176

Topic:

Hansard Page: CA139 Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

In the child-care advisory report *Child care beyond 2001* there are a number of recommendations for further research and analysis as well as some for other activities that the government should be taking advice on. Could you detail the level of your involvement and the level of consultation you were giving to government?

Answer:

The Institute was contracted by FACS in October 1999 to prepare a report for the National Childcare Advisory Council on the views of parents and families using a range of child care services. Seven focus group discussions in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland were conducted in which the perspectives of parents were collected on a range of issues relevant to the demand for future child care services. Report was completed and submitted to the Council in December 1999.

Ms Sarah Wise presented the findings to the National Childcare Advisory Council Working Group Meeting held in Melbourne on February 1, 2000.

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Output Group: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Question No: 177

Topic:

Hansard Page: CA143 Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Family and Marriage Program – Program B

Re: the Overlapping Jurisdictions in Child Protection Project concluded? Can you give us an overview of the project and its outcomes, with particular reference to any implications for the Commonwealth? Would you also provide a summary of the findings?

Answer:

The study of jurisdictional overlap in the area of child protection was conducted by Dr Belinda Fehlberg, Associate Professor and Reader in Law at the University of Melbourne between 1999 and 2001. Between January-December 2000, Dr Fehlberg was Principal Research Fellow in the Institute's Family and Marriage Program.

The Project was funded by grants made directly to Dr Fehlberg by the Australian Research Council. While working at the institute, Dr Fehlberg continued to work on the project, and on completion of her work for the Institute, the project and funds remained with her.

The central aim of the study was to consider a sample of cases involving jurisdictional overlaps between the Family Court of Australia and the Melbourne Children's Court. The objective was to provide a systematic analysis of the problem, on which discussion about jurisdictional overlaps and possible reform could proceed.

The findings of the study were reported in two journal articles, one published while the authors were based at the Institute and one after:

'Jurisdictional overlaps between the Family Division of the Children's Court of Victoria and the Family Court of Australia', Fehlberg, B; Kelly, F, *Australian Journal of Family Law* v.14 no.3 Nov 2000: 211-233

'Australia's fragmented family law system: jurisdictional overlap in the area of child protection' Kelly, F; Fehlberg, B, *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family* v.16 no.1 Apr 2002: 38-70

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Output Group: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Question No: 178

Topic:

Hansard Page: CA143 Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Through your contractual arrangement with the department are officers able to phone you and ask for advice in a number of areas. Can you provide details on whether the department has used this level of consultation in considering the following matters: the recent decision to freeze special needs subsidy scheme funding, the decision to reallocate existing family day care and outside school hours care places, funding the Australian Council for Children and Parenting to focus more on early childhood matters?

Answer:

The Institute has not been approached to provide advice to the Department of Family and Community Services on the matters listed.

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Output Group: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Question No: 180

Topic:

Hansard Page: CA145 Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you provide a list of the discrete research project, workshops and clearinghouse functions that the government and the AIFS have contracted to do or have carried out in the past 12 months?

Answer:

Contract	Value	Contract signed	Contract expires	Contractor
Longitudinal Study of Australian Children	\$ 4,383,000	21/3/02	20/3/03	Department of Family and Community Services
Stronger Families Learning Exchange	\$ 4,199,742	01/01/02	30/6/04	Department of Family and Community Services
National Child Protection Clearing House	\$ 881,433	09/12/00	08/12/03	Department of Family and Community Services
Study of Australian Relationship Education Service Activities	\$ 176,790	01/06/01	30/6/02	Department of Family and Community Services
	\$ 6,881,223			

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Output Group: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4

Question No:162

Topic: Widening data matching criteria pilot

Hansard Page: CA 89

Senator Bishop. asked: Centrelink uses sampling for its reviews and its compliance reviews look at certain criteria. Can you provide me with the details of the existing and also proposed criteria, the reasons for the change and what the outcome is expected to be?

Answer: Data matching involves the identification of a person on separate data bases through the use of identifiers such as name, address, date of birth, etc. In some instances legislation allows for the use of specific identifiers such as the Tax File Number (TFN). It is not proposed to change any of these identifiers under this initiative.

Once a data match has been identified, other information about the customer is considered to determine whether an incorrect payment may have occurred. These details can include such issues as whether the person's details are the same on both records, whether they have already informed Centrelink about their employment or whether they have correctly declared their assets. Depending on the type of discrepancy and the likelihood of that affecting the person's payment, Centrelink will further review the person's circumstances to ensure their payment is correct.

This initiative will pilot some new ways of determining the likelihood of an incorrect payment to see if there are incorrect payments which are currently not being fully investigated because of the selection process.

Providing further detail may compromise the integrity of the data matching program, as informing those who do seek to undermine the integrity of the system of the full range of checks and controls in place may actually help them to avoid detection.

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Output Group: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4

.....Question No: 163

Topic: Increased Rent Assistance Reviews and building on whole of government approach to targeting the cash economy. .

Hansard Page: CA 90

Senator Bishop asked: With reference to the PBS, Page 184. Can you break up the savings in dot point 2 and 4? If you would break them up, to the extent you can, via each dot point and each of the years.

Answer: The calculation of savings is in accordance with a formula agreed with the Department of Finance and Administration. Under the formula, it is assumed that customers whose rate of payment is reduced or cancelled as a result of a review, will not resume the former rate of payment (or not come back into pay if they are cancelled) for 26 fortnights. Payments that are restored within 6 weeks are not included in the savings calculations.

Because customers will be cancelled progressively throughout the year, savings can result both in the current and next financial year. Savings comprise 50% of downward variations identified in the year they occur with the remaining 50% of downward variations carrying over to the following year. The remaining savings comprise 91% of the total debt identified, (there is an expected 9% of debt which cannot be recovered), and are attributed to the savings figure in the year they occur. Estimates for downward variations and debt levels are based on management information derived from pilots or similar review activity.

A breakdown of estimated savings from initiatives targetting the cash economy and rent assistance is provided in the table below.

	03	04	05	06	total
IT Expansion					
Estimated Savings \$m (Fiscal)	\$4.172	\$13.571	\$17.856	\$18.344	\$53.943
HO Expansion					
Estimated Savings \$m (fiscal)	\$5.585	\$6.088	\$6.275	\$6.468	\$24.416
Assistance (ACM)					
Estimated Savings \$m (fiscal)	\$8.183	\$20.630	\$27.344	\$28.069	\$84.226

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Output Group: 1.1, 1.2 and 3.1

Question No: 170

Topic: Compliance Campaign

Hansard Page: CA 97

Senator Collins asked:

Estimates of customer impact were based on research undertaken by FaCS (in terms of customer' behaviour) and results from advertising campaigns in New Zealand and the UK. Can you provide results of the research and also the information on the New Zealand and the UK programs.

Answer:

FaCS has studied ways in which to encourage Centrelink customers to comply with their notification requirements including customers' and non-customers':

- levels of awareness about the need to report changes in circumstances;
- attitudes towards failure to report changes in circumstances; and
- attitudes about a communications campaign to encourage reporting.

The research found Centrelink customers to be generally well informed and aware of their reporting obligations. Members of the public also had a reasonable understanding of Centrelink customers' reporting arrangements.

However, non-reporting was perceived as being widespread in the community, in that:

- Many customers and taxpayers know of people who have not reported changes in circumstances to Centrelink;
- Customers and taxpayers felt that customers know they could get away without reporting their changes to Centrelink.; and
- There was a commonly held view that Centrelink cannot 'catch' people who don't report cash-in-hand earnings and changes in marital status - partly because people do not hear or see publicity related to people getting 'caught', and also because many customers have personally known others who previously got away with non-reporting;

Most customers, and all taxpayers, felt that more should be done to encourage prompt and honest reporting by Centrelink customers. Television advertisements were seen as being the most effective way to communicate compliance messages.

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UK and New Zealand Campaigns

Communication campaigns addressing voluntary compliance issues have also been run in the UK and New Zealand.

UK findings indicated that overall, awareness and intolerance of 'welfare fraud' rose following the campaign. Members of the public were also reassured that the government was doing something to address non-compliant behaviour. See **Attachment A** for more details.

The New Zealand campaign was highly successful in terms of raising general awareness of benefit crime issues and sending a clear message to those who were committing 'benefit crime'. This was evidenced by a greater number of people amending their benefit situations and the average level of overpayment identified being three times the normal. See **Attachment B** for more details.

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Attachment A

Post Stage Qualitative Research on UK campaign

People's views towards different *types* of benefit fraud tend to be the same. They condemn people who work full time and claim benefit (benefit supplementing income) but sympathise with people who dabble in occasional benefit fraud (income supplementing benefit). The overall view people take of benefit fraud seems to depend on whether people see the former or the latter as being more prevalent.

Overall, the test campaign appears to raise awareness and intolerance of the problem; reassure the public that the government are doing something; effectively get across the hotline number.

The television advertising works by personalising people who are committing fraud. It could be argued that this is problematic since it provokes irritation about the individual people portrayed rather than the issue of benefit fraud itself. However, generating any feeling about the issue of benefit fraud at a rational level seems very hard to do – people don't believe that if this problem was solved, they themselves would benefit.

The television advertising reinforces the idea that 'fraud' is really a problem when benefit supplements income ie working full time and long term and claiming benefit at the same time. This is a message that most people (with the exception of long term fraudsters) already agree with.

However, extending the message to include 'occasional' benefit fraud – where income supplements benefit – presents massive difficulties. In the current context, public sympathy would almost certainly lie with the 'just' fraudsters, with the potential that any such initiative could backfire badly. It would be very difficult, at this stage, to get people to condemn all 'casual' fraud.

Among different target groups, the campaign appears to make some *honest claimants* think twice or help affirm them in their chosen course; be unsettling for some *recent dishonest claimants* who do not feel particularly comfortable about what they are doing anyway; have little effect on *long term dishonest claimants*.

Given current attitudes towards benefit fraud, this is probably as much as an advertising campaign can hope to achieve at this stage. If it raises the debate – moves public attitudes and stops people who are on the fringes of benefit fraud – then it can be deemed to have been reasonably successful. It is probably an unrealistic objective for this campaign to expect a change in attitude among long term dishonest claimants.

Most (with the exception of dishonest claimants) feel that trying to catch dishonest claimants is reasonable and feel pleased that the government is doing something about the problem. However, they do feel that this is for the DSS to do, and not for them to do via a hotline. The hotline is an emotive subject, and most feel that 'snitching' is a worse crime than benefit fraud

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itself. As a result, the idea of the hotline may be getting in the way of a greater sense of injustice developing around benefit fraud.

The general public feel that the advertising should target dishonest claimants and act as a deterrent to benefit fraud, rather than target the general public to try and encourage them to take on the role of informant. People are very rarely prepared to own up to being willing to take on this role – they reject personal use of the hotline out of hand. They would like to see a clearer overall emphasis on the action and consequences, as is the case with print and radio.

However, the idea of getting tough on fraud is weakened by a lack of corroborating evidence in the local media of successful prosecutions, heavy penalties and so on. Awareness of people caught defrauding the system is low. The overall feel is not of a heavy weight campaign.

People need to be convinced that action is being taken – that if they do defraud the system they *do* risk being caught. Furthermore, they need to be convinced that if they are caught, the penalties will be severe and currently the penalties are not seen as severe.

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Attachment B

Work and Income New Zealand

Benefit Crime Media Campaign – Report

Executive Summary

The campaign was highly successful in terms of:

- Raising general awareness of benefit crime issues, as evidenced by survey research, by the considerable public and media discussion that took place and by the number of calls to the ‘freephone’, and
- Sending a clear message to those who were committing benefit crime, as evidenced by a greater number of people than normal deciding to amend their benefit situations and the average level of overpayment identified being three times the normal.

The campaign resulted in 1,871 cases of fraudulent overpayment being identified. The value of those overpayments was \$17,010,680. The average overpayment was \$9,091. A comparison of campaign expenditure and the level of savings achieved shows a return of \$11.32 for each dollar spent on the campaign.

Introduction

The purpose of the benefit crime programme is to safeguard taxpayer’s money and maintain the integrity of Work and Income New Zealand’s business. This is done by minimising the incidence of benefit crime and responding effectively when it occurs. To achieve this a programme has been developed with a mix of pro-active and reactive strategies designed to:

- Deter (pro-active) – deterrence involves the delivery of messages that benefit crime is wrong, that if you commit or attempt benefit crime you will be caught and if caught you will be punished. It also involves undertaking and marketing the successful detection, investigation and sanction of actual cases of benefit crime.
- Prevent (pro-active) – prevention aims to stop benefit crime before it is committed. Responsibility lies largely with front-line staff. In managing their customer base it is essential they ensure that only those eligible for a benefit are granted one and that their entitlements are correctly assessed at grant and subsequent reviews.
- Detect (reactive) – benefit crime is detected through several avenues; allegations from various sources, generally the public; file suspicions, from front-line staff referrals, data matches with other Government agencies; s11A investigations targeting employers and local initiative actions targeting perceived risks.
- Sanction (reactive) – once an investigation has been completed, and benefit crime has been proven, punitive action is considered. A case may result in one of the following sanctions being imposed – prosecution, monetary penalty or formal warning/alternative action. The sanction is designed to punish the customer relevant to the nature and extent of their offending. Any sanction imposed is in addition to the requirement for an associated debt to be re-paid.

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Objectives

The media campaign was designed to deter and prevent benefit crime. Its objectives were to foster the general public's awareness of benefit crime and to make people who were defrauding the benefit system realise that it is a crime and there is a good chance they would be caught. A desired consequence of this second aspect was also to identify and eliminate as much existing benefit crime as possible.

Timing

The idea of a benefit crime media campaign had been considered for some time but was first included in the Income Support annual plan in 1997/1998. In February 1998 the Board approved, with Ministerial sanction, to expenditure of \$1.5m for the campaign.

On 1 March 1998 four advertising agencies were invited to tender for the campaign. They were asked to present proposals no later than 30 March. Following the presentations HKM was confirmed as the successful tender by Income Support's General Manager on 1 April.

The campaign ran between 30 April 1998 and 30 June 1998.

Campaign Format

The campaign was run in two stages using television, radio and newspaper. Stage one was devoted to the prevention messages, with a focus on reminding the public that benefit fraud is a crime and explaining the effect of such offending on all New Zealanders. Stage two was devoted to deterrence, promoting the concept that offenders will be caught.

Comments received about the campaign range across the entire spectrum, from highly positive to highly negative, both in terms of the format and the messages. Five members of the public and two advocacy groups lodged complaints about the campaign with the Advertising Standards Complaints Board. None were upheld.

Issues

The campaign included a 'freephone' facility for members of the public to call with any queries or information they wished to discuss. Minimal emphasis was put on this 'freephone' number in the advertisements so as not to detract from the key messages. This was reflected in anecdotal feedback received where a number of people commented that, in terms of television, it was in fact too small and not on screen for long enough. They also commented that the freephone provided a useful avenue to express their views about the campaign. Nonetheless, the 'freephone' facility led to accusations that the campaign was merely designed to encourage people to "*dob in a beneficiary*".

This is too simplistic a view of what was a complex and sophisticated campaign. Income Support has always received allegations of benefit crime and did not need to run such a campaign to help encourage these. It was in fact the high number of allegations and the amount of crime being detected that prompted the campaign, with its focus on raising

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awareness, both among the general public and benefit criminals. The aim was not to raise the number of allegations but to deter and prevent benefit crime.

Outcomes

Research conducted by Colmar Brunton following the campaign showed a high awareness of benefit crime issues. They found that:

- 94% were aware that benefit fraud is a crime
- 81% believed that people cheat the benefit system
- 92% felt that benefit fraudsters should be punished
- 77% believed that benefit crime is a serious problem

This was an excellent outcome given the intention of the campaign was to ensure that people had an awareness of benefit crime. Most certainly the campaign sparked public debate about the issues surrounding benefit crime, as evidenced by the amount and nature of media coverage received.

When asked why they felt benefit crime was serious people responded that the money could be used in important areas such as education or health; because genuine beneficiaries were “*tarred with the same brush*”; because others might not receive what they need; because it is taxpayers’ money and simply because it is theft.

The research found that those with the greatest awareness of benefit crime issues were people aged 20 to 39 and those in higher socio-economic groups. Those with the lowest awareness of benefit crime issues were pensioners, the unemployed and people aged over 70 and under 20.

Similar groupings were found in terms of attitudes towards benefit crime. Those with the strongest negative attitudes to benefit crime were those in full time employment, blue collar workers and those aged 20 to 39. Those with the most lenient attitudes to benefit crime were students, pensioners and people aged over 70 and under 20.

In terms of data matching, respondents viewed it positively provided it was done on a discretionary basis. This perhaps reflects a view that if data matching was not undertaken the benefit system would be more prone to abuse. The results showed that 59% of people were aware that Income Support compared its records with other government agencies and 77% of this group were aware that the Department swaps information with the Inland Revenue Department.

Attitudes to punishment were influenced by the motivation of the fraudster. It was felt that benefit crime committed because of need, rather than greed, should be treated more leniently, although the money should still be paid back. Those motivated by greed should be more severely punished, as should those knowingly aiding fraudsters.

Benefit Crime Results

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Of the almost 21,000 calls received on the 'freephone' 11,670 were allegations as a result of the campaign. Another 1,397 were allegations not specifically related to the campaign and the balance were general comments regarding the campaign.

As at 28 March 1999 10,757 cases had been investigated as a result of the campaign. From these investigations 1,871 cases of fraudulent overpayment had been identified. The value of those overpayments was \$17,010,680. The average overpayment was \$9,091. This average overpayment level is about three times more than any result previously recorded.

The vast majority of the overpayments identified were 'conjugal status' ie people receiving the DPB who were not entitled to it. These came to over \$14 million. During the period of the campaign there were 1,500 more DPB cancellations than in the same period in the previous year. There was also an increase in the number of DPB customers moving to a married rate of benefit compared to the same period in the previous year.

'Undeclared employment' accounted for a further \$2.1 million in overpayments identified.

A comparison of campaign expenditure and the level of savings achieved shows a return of \$11.32 for each dollar spent on the campaign.

Conclusion

There is no doubt the benefit crime media campaign raised public awareness of the issues of concern and motivated a large number of current beneficiaries to reconsider their status with Work and Income New Zealand. These were the objectives of the campaign and the findings are supported by independent research. As discussed above, the campaign also achieved savings to date, of over \$17 million.

While this Campaign was highly successful, the past decade has seen a huge increase in the amount of benefit crime detected. This can be clearly demonstrated by comparing the amount of benefit crime detected in 1990/91 of \$24.4m with the \$101.9m detected in 1997/98. Given this increase, the 1998 Benefit Crime Media Campaign should be seen as part of Work and Income New Zealand's ongoing deterrence and prevention strategy. It seems a reasonable option to undertake a similar campaign in the future.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 56

Topic: Child Abuse Prevention – Early Intervention and Crisis Programs

Hansard Page: CA 105

Senator Collins asked:

Can you provide for me the details of all the Commonwealth funded prevention, early intervention and crisis programs in the area of child abuse?

Answer:

The following programs are funded under the Child Abuse Prevention appropriation.

Early Intervention Parenting – The projects are aimed at child abuse prevention, improved parenting and strengthening families, with a key focus being the meeting of the special needs of families in rural and remote areas, Indigenous families and those from multi-cultural backgrounds. The projects will provide a range of benefits for families including: parenting courses; home visits by professionals and volunteers; establishment of playgroups; outreach services; and family support.

Good Beginnings Prototype Projects – The projects are aimed at prevention of child abuse.

National Child Protection Clearinghouse - FaCS funds the Clearinghouse, which is based in the Australian Institute of Family Studies, to disseminate information on child protection activities and research to professionals and organisations in this field. Among the clients of the Clearinghouse are policy makers including State and Territory government departments responsible for family and community services, service providers, professionals in child abuse prevention, researchers and students.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 57

Topic: Child Abuse Prevention – Expenditure in 2002-03

Hansard Page: CA 105

Senator Denman asked:

Can you provide a breakdown of what projects are being funded by the \$4 million in the 2002-03 budget?

Answer:

Details of expenditure for **Child Abuse Prevention** for **2002-03** are still being finalised.

In **2001-02**, the Child Abuse Prevention appropriation was \$3,923,000. And the following table details the estimated split of expenditure.

Program	2001-02
Early Intervention Parenting	\$3,407,443
Good Beginnings Prototype Projects	\$157,162
National Child Protection Clearinghouse (general contract, copyright costs, ad-hoc research)	\$359,436
TOTAL	\$3,924,041

As at 4 June 2002, the following organisations were funded under Early Intervention Parenting:

Legal Name of Organisation	Short Name/Trading Name	Name of Project/Project Description	State/Territory	Expected Funding (over lifetime of agreement) (\$ including GST)
Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn as Trustee for Marymead Child and Family Centre	Marymead Child and Family Centre	Parenting Between Cultures - Stage II	ACT	\$198,000.00
Byron Shire Council	Byron Shire Council	CARE Parent Support Project	NSW	\$143,000.00
Child Abuse Prevention Services Foundation Inc	Child Abuse Prevention Service	Awareness/Intervention/ Stronger Families - CAPS	NSW	\$165,000.00
Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre Inc	Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre Inc	Parents as Partners	NSW	\$198,000.00

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Deniliquin Council for Social Development	Deniliquin Council for Social Development Family Support Program	Deniliquin Family Support - Series of Parenting Programs	NSW	\$66,000.00
Fairfield City Council	Fairfield City Council	The Caravan Park Parenting Project	NSW	\$165,000.00
Good Beginnings Australia Ltd	Good Beginnings Hobart	Good Beginnings Volunteer Home Visiting and parenting program	NSW	\$205,700.00
Good Beginnings Australia Ltd	Good Beginnings Katherine	Good Beginnings Volunteer Home Visiting and Parenting Program	NSW	\$147,169.00
Good Beginnings Australia Ltd	Good Beginnings Inner Western Sydney	Good Beginnings Volunteer Home Visiting and Parenting Program	NSW	\$179,189.00
KU Children's Services	KU Children's Services	Families First Macarthur	NSW	\$176,000.00
NAPCAN Australia - National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect	NAPCAN Australia	National Child Protection Week Campaign 2-8 September 2001	NSW	\$220,000.00
NAPCAN Australia - National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect	NAPCAN Australia	Family and Community Workshops based on Traditional Aboriginal Culture	NSW	\$220,000.00
Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies	Tresillian Family Care Centres	Pilot Home Visiting Intervention Programme (PHVIP)	NSW	\$198,000.00
Shoalhaven Division of General Practice Inc	Shoalhaven Division of General Practice Inc	Young Parents Early Intervention Parenting Project	NSW	\$49,500.00
The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NSW) for Lower Mountains Family Support Service	Lower Mountains Family Support Service	Family Links Project	NSW	\$90,733.00
The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NSW) operating as UnitingCare Burnside	UnitingCare Burnside - Macarthur Family Services	Engaging and Strengthening Parents with Mental Health Problems	NSW	\$99,000.00
Playgroup Association of the Northern Territory Inc	Playgroup Association of the Northern Territory Inc	Parenting Through Playgroup	NT	\$198,000.00
YWCA of Darwin	YWCA	YWCA Palmerston Parenting Support Service	NT	\$165,000.00
Anglicare Central Queensland Ltd	Anglicare Central Queensland Ltd	Specialised Early Intervention Parenting Program	QLD	\$198,000.00
Northern Peninsula Area Women's Shelter ATSI Corporation	Northern Peninsula Area Women's Shelter ATSI Corporation	NPA Intensive Family Support	QLD	\$198,000.00
Playgroup Association of QLD Inc	Playgroup Association of Queensland Inc	Sing and Grow	QLD	\$187,000.00
Save the Children Fund - Queensland Division	Save the Children Fund - Queensland Division	Mobile Playscheme	QLD	\$99,000.00
Sisters Inside Inc	Sisters Inside Inc	Project PEEK (Programs to Enable and Empower Kids)	QLD	\$198,000.00
Anglican Community Care Inc	Anglican Community Care Inc	Flying Start	SA	\$132,000.00
Port Adelaide Central Mission Inc	Port Adelaide Central Mission Inc	Support and Strength in Families [Takikurtinna Wiltarnendi]	SA	\$198,000.00
University of South Australia	University of South Australia (School of Psychology) - Whyalla Campus	Rural and Remote Parenting Support to Preschool and Primary School Age Children	SA	\$159,500.00

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Anglicare Tasmania Inc	Anglicare Devonport	Parenting Support Project (Good Beginnings)	TAS	\$176,000.00
Geeveston Community Centre Inc	Geeveston Community Centre Inc	Family Support Worker and Early Intervention Parenting Program	TAS	\$103,400.00
Young Men's Christian Association of Hobart Inc [funding currently being transferred to another organisation]	YMCA of Hobart	YMCA Early Intervention Project	TAS	\$51,976.00
Australians Against Child Abuse	Australians Against Child Abuse	Every Child Is Important: A community based parenting program	VIC	\$203,500.00
Baptist Community Care Ltd	Abercare Family Services	Home-Start Western	VIC	\$198,000.00
Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc	Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc	Parent Child Day Stay Program	VIC	\$165,000.00
Jesuit Social Services Ltd	Parenting Australia	Early Intervention Parenting Projects	VIC	\$198,000.00
Migrant Resource Centre North East Inc	Migrant Resource Centre North East Inc	Parenting in a New Culture - An Orientation Program	VIC	\$159,500.00
The Queen Elizabeth Centre	The Queen Elizabeth Centre	Parenting Plus	VIC	\$187,000.00
Tweddle Child & Family Health Service	Tweddle Child & Family Health Service	Strengthening Families by Accurate Assessment of Parenting Skills and Developmental Needs	VIC	\$198,000.00
Women and Children's Health	Centre for Community Child Health, Royal Children's Hospital	Improving Access to Playgroups for all Families	VIC	\$181,500.00
Agencies for South West Accommodation Inc	Agencies for South West Accommodation Inc	Delivery of parenting packages targeting 'at risk' young parents that support and strengthen parenting roles and reduce the likelihood of future crisis. Skills based programs are individually tailored. Involves collaboration with the social work area of local university (Edith Cowan University).	WA	\$187,000.00
Mofflyn	Mofflyn	Early intervention parent support service, interpreting certain aspects of NEWPIN programs. (NEWPIN is a self-help, early intervention child protection program that works with families under stress to break the cycle of destructive family behaviour.)	WA	\$198,000.00
Victoria Park Youth Accommodation Inc	Victoria Park Youth Accommodation Inc	Building blocks for stronger families	WA	\$132,000.00

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 59

Topic: Child Abuse Prevention – Funding History

Hansard Page: CA 106

Senator Collins asked:

How has the funding grown in this area since 1994?

Answer:

The 1994-95 Budget included funding (for the Department of Human Services and Health) to establish the National Prevention Strategy for Child Abuse and Neglect. This initiative was continued in the 1998-99 Budget. Part way through the 1998-99 financial year, responsibility for Child Abuse Prevention was transferred to the Department of Family and Community Services.

According to Budget papers, the funding for Child Abuse Prevention is as follows:

Financial Year	Budget Appropriation (\$m)	Final Appropriation (\$m)
1994-95 (cash)	3.155	3.202
1995-96	2.667	3.671
1996-97	2.482	2.482
1997-98	1.892	1.892
1998-99	1.859	1.859
1999-2000 (expense)	1.787	2.079
2000-01	2.722	2.738
2001-02	3.923	3.923
2002-03	4.013	

NOTE: Prior to 1994-95, funding for Child Abuse Prevention of some \$300,000 to \$400,000 per annum was provided.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 60

Topic: National Strategy for the Prevention of Child Abuse

Hansard Page: CA 107

Senator Denman asked:

Is it correct that in 1995 the National Strategy for the Prevention of Child Abuse was not implemented or replaced by the government? What happened?

Answer:

The National Child Protection Council developed the National Strategy for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. The Strategy was provided to State and Territory governments for implementation, as they have responsibility for child protection legislation and implementation. The Commonwealth role was research and communication.

Since 1996, the Commonwealth Government has invested significantly in initiatives with a prevention and early intervention focus. The Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, funding for child abuse prevention programs and broader parenting programs are just some examples. The Commonwealth Government also provides funds for the National Child Protection Clearinghouse, and last year, established the Australian Council for Children and Parenting to provide broad advice on parenting and issues relating to child abuse and neglect.

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Output Group: 1.1

Question No: 67

Topic: Child Abuse Prevention - Authority

Hansard Page: CA 146

Senator Bishop asked:

In the area of child abuse and child protection, who is the Commonwealth head of power to give authority to allocate funding? What does child abuse come under? Is that under divorce power?

Answer:

State and Territory Governments are responsible for child protection legislation and implementation. The Commonwealth has the power to appropriate funds for Commonwealth purposes. In this context, the issue of what is a Commonwealth purpose has been interpreted more broadly than a matter for which Commonwealth could legislate.

The Commonwealth has provided leadership in the area of child abuse, focussing on prevention and early intervention. A number of initiatives have been funded in recent years through the Department of Family and Community Services. Allocation of funds in relation to the Child Abuse prevention appropriation is detailed in the response to question 33b. In addition, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (then the Minister for Community Services) established the Australian Council for Children and Parenting in February 2001 to provide a community perspective to the Government on issues affecting children and parents, including the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 33

Topic: Child Abuse Prevention/Domestic Violence

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

33(a) Please provide details of all Commonwealth funded prevention, early intervention and crisis programs in the area of child abuse.

33(b) Can the Department provide a breakdown of what projects are being funded by the \$4m for child abuse in the 2002-03 Budget?

33(c) Provide details of any domestic violence or child abuse/protection programs funded under this Outcome Group and their funding details (including forward estimates). For each of these, who is the target group, what sort of formal evaluations are being done, how many children and families are being assisted?

33(d) Were any Domestic Violence programs defunded in the last financial year [2000-01], or due to lose funding at the end of this financial year [2001-02]?

Answer:

33(a)

The following programs are funded under the Child Abuse Prevention appropriation.

Early Intervention Parenting – The projects are aimed at child abuse prevention, improved parenting and strengthening families, with a key focus being the meeting of the special needs of families in rural and remote areas, Indigenous families and those from multi-cultural backgrounds. The projects will provide a range of benefits for families including: parenting courses; home visits by professionals and volunteers; establishment of playgroups; outreach services; and family support.

Good Beginnings Prototype Projects – The projects are aimed at prevention of child abuse.

National Child Protection Clearinghouse - FaCS funds the Clearinghouse, which is based in the Australian Institute of Family Studies, to disseminate information on child protection activities and research to professionals and organisations in this field. Among the clients of the Clearinghouse are policy makers including State and Territory government departments responsible for family and community services, service providers, professionals in child abuse prevention, researchers and students.

33(b)

Details of expenditure for **Child Abuse Prevention** for **2002-03** are still being finalised, however many of the projects funded in 2001-02 are contracted to be continued in 2002-03.

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In **2001-02**, the Child Abuse Prevention appropriation was \$3,923,000. And the following table details the estimated split of expenditure.

Program	2001-02
Early Intervention Parenting	\$3,407,443
Good Beginnings Prototype Projects	\$157,162
National Child Protection Clearinghouse (general contract, copyright costs, ad-hoc research)	\$359,436
TOTAL	\$3,924,041

As at 4 June 2002, the following organisations were funded under Early Intervention Parenting:

Legal Name of Organisation	Short Name/Trading Name	Name of Project/Project Description	State/Territory	Expected Funding (over lifetime of agreement) (\$ including GST)
				NOTE: Most of the organisations are funded for two years
Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn as Trustee for Marymead Child and Family Centre	Marymead Child and Family Centre	Parenting Between Cultures - Stage II	ACT	\$198,000
Byron Shire Council	Byron Shire Council	CARE Parent Support Project	NSW	\$143,000
Child Abuse Prevention Services Foundation Inc	Child Abuse Prevention Service	Awareness/Intervention/ Stronger Families - CAPS	NSW	\$165,000
Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre Inc	Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre Inc	Parents as Partners	NSW	\$198,000
Deniliquin Council for Social Development	Deniliquin Council for Social Development Family Support Program	Deniliquin Family Support - Series of Parenting Programs	NSW	\$66,000
Fairfield City Council	Fairfield City Council	The Caravan Park Parenting Project	NSW	\$165,000
Good Beginnings Australia Ltd	Good Beginnings Hobart	Good Beginnings Volunteer Home Visiting and parenting program	NSW	\$205,700
Good Beginnings Australia Ltd	Good Beginnings Katherine	Good Beginnings Volunteer Home Visiting and Parenting Program	NSW	\$147,169
Good Beginnings Australia Ltd	Good Beginnings Inner Western Sydney	Good Beginnings Volunteer Home Visiting and Parenting Program	NSW	\$179,189
KU Children's Services	KU Children's Services	Families First Macarthur	NSW	\$176,000
NAPCAN Australia - National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect	NAPCAN Australia	National Child Protection Week Campaign 2-8 September 2001	NSW	\$220,000

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NAPCAN Australia - National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect	NAPCAN Australia	Family and Community Workshops based on Traditional Aboriginal Culture	NSW	\$220,000
Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies	Tresillian Family Care Centres	Pilot Home Visiting Intervention Programme (PHVIP)	NSW	\$198,000
Shoalhaven Division of General Practice Inc	Shoalhaven Division of General Practice Inc	Young Parents Early Intervention Parenting Project	NSW	\$49,500
The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NSW) for Lower Mountains Family Support Service	Lower Mountains Family Support Service	Family Links Project	NSW	\$90,733
The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NSW) operating as UnitingCare Burnside	UnitingCare Burnside - Macarthur Family Services	Engaging and Strengthening Parents with Mental Health Problems	NSW	\$99,000
Playgroup Association of the Northern Territory Inc	Playgroup Association of the Northern Territory Inc	Parenting Through Playgroup	NT	\$198,000
YWCA of Darwin	YWCA	YWCA Palmerston Parenting Support Service	NT	\$165,000
Anglicare Central Queensland Ltd	Anglicare Central Queensland Ltd	Specialised Early Intervention Parenting Program	QLD	\$198,000
Northern Peninsula Area Women's Shelter ATSI Corporation	Northern Peninsula Area Women's Shelter ATSI Corporation	NPA Intensive Family Support	QLD	\$198,000
Playgroup Association of QLD Inc	Playgroup Association of Queensland Inc	Sing and Grow	QLD	\$187,000
Save the Children Fund - Queensland Division	Save the Children Fund - Queensland Division	Mobile Playscheme	QLD	\$99,000
Sisters Inside Inc	Sisters Inside Inc	Project PEEK (Programs to Enable and Empower Kids)	QLD	\$198,000
Anglican Community Care Inc	Anglican Community Care Inc	Flying Start	SA	\$132,000
Port Adelaide Central Mission Inc	Port Adelaide Central Mission Inc	Support and Strength in Families [Takikurtinna Wiltarnendi]	SA	\$198,000
University of South Australia	University of South Australia (School of Psychology) - Whyalla Campus	Rural and Remote Parenting Support to Preschool and Primary School Age Children	SA	\$159,500
Anglicare Tasmania Inc	Anglicare Devonport	Parenting Support Project (Good Beginnings)	TAS	\$176,000
Geeveston Community Centre Inc	Geeveston Community Centre Inc	Family Support Worker and Early Intervention Parenting Program	TAS	\$103,400
Young Men's Christian Association of Hobart Inc [funding currently being transferred to another organisation]	YMCA of Hobart	YMCA Early Intervention Project	TAS	\$51,976
Australians Against Child Abuse	Australians Against Child Abuse	Every Child Is Important: A community based parenting program	VIC	\$203,500
Baptist Community Care Ltd	Abercare Family Services	Home-Start Western	VIC	\$198,000
Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc	Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc	Parent Child Day Stay Program	VIC	\$165,000

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Jesuit Social Services Ltd	Parenting Australia	Early Intervention Parenting Projects	VIC	\$198,000
Migrant Resource Centre North East Inc	Migrant Resource Centre North East Inc	Parenting in a New Culture - An Orientation Program	VIC	\$159,500
The Queen Elizabeth Centre	The Queen Elizabeth Centre	Parenting Plus	VIC	\$187,000
Tweddle Child & Family Health Service	Tweddle Child & Family Health Service	Strengthening Families by Accurate Assessment of Parenting Skills and Developmental Needs	VIC	\$198,000
Women and Children's Health	Centre for Community Child Health, Royal Children's Hospital	Improving Access to Playgroups for all Families	VIC	\$181,500
Agencies for South West Accommodation Inc	Agencies for South West Accommodation Inc	Delivery of parenting packages targeting 'at risk' young parents that support and strengthen parenting roles and reduce the likelihood of future crisis. Skills based programs are individually tailored. Involves collaboration with the social work area of local university (Edith Cowan University).	WA	\$187,000
Mofflyn	Mofflyn	Early intervention parent support service, interpreting certain aspects of NEWPIN programs. (NEWPIN is a self-help, early intervention child protection program that works with families under stress to break the cycle of destructive family behaviour.)	WA	\$198,000
Victoria Park Youth Accommodation Inc	Victoria Park Youth Accommodation Inc	Building blocks for stronger families	WA	\$132,000

33(c)

Funding for Child Abuse Prevention programs is detailed in the response to 33(b). In relation to domestic violence, the department has recently funded eight organisations (one in each capital city) through the Family Relationships Services Program (FRSP) to provide specialist domestic violence services. Total recurrent funding of \$800,000 per annum is available for the services. These services will provide integrated, whole-of-family interventions to families (men, women and children) affected by domestic violence and will act as a referral point for other FRSP services. Funding has been allocated as follows:

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City	Organisation	Funding per annum
Sydney	Relationships Australia (NSW) & Lifecare	\$160 000
Melbourne	Relationships Australia (Victoria) Inc	\$100 000
Adelaide	Adelaide Central Mission Inc	\$100 000
Brisbane	Kinections	\$160 000
Perth	Centrecare Inc	\$100 000
Hobart	Centacare Family Services, Tasmania	\$60 000
Darwin	Centacare NT	\$60 000
Canberra	Relationships Australia Canberra & Region Inc	\$60 000
TOTAL		\$800 000

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33(d)

No domestic violence programs were defunded in the last financial year (2000-01), and no programs ended at the end of this financial year (2001-02).

A number of projects were, however, completed at the end of 2000-01 in line with their contracts:

- WESNET - WESNET had been funded for 3 years, from July 1998-June 2001 to undertake a number of projects that could contribute to the national initiatives of Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (PADV). The projects were completed in line with the end of phase 1 of PADV.
- Two organisations (Anglicare, Tasmania and Kinway, Albany, a division of Anglicare, WA) were funded to conduct programs designed to test the efficacy of a range of early interventions with individual members of client families experiencing domestic violence.
- Two organisations (Berry Street, Vic and Youth and Family Services, Logan City, Qld), were funded to test efficacy of a range of early interventions with adolescent boys who have been victims of or witnesses to domestic violence in order to reduce the risk or likelihood that they may also become perpetrators.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 58

Topic: Guidelines for Early Intervention Parenting

Hansard Page: CA 106

Senator Collins asked:

Can you provide us with a copy of the scope of the request for tender for the Early Intervention Parenting projects?

Answer:

Attached are the Guidelines for Early Intervention Parenting (aka Prevention and Early Intervention Parenting).

[Note: attachments have not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

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Output Group: 1.1 and 2.2

Question No:110

Topic: Stronger Families and Communities Strategy

Hansard Page: CA 35

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

Those savings of \$10 million and \$6.5 million—can you provide them to us on a state-by-state basis?

Mr Sullivan—I do not think that they exist on a state-by-state basis. They are a project component basis. We can give you the five components of the program and where they come from.

Answer:

The reduction has been applied to the community based linked initiatives of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy: the Stronger Families Fund, Early Intervention Parenting, Potential Leaders in Local Communities, Local Solutions to Local Problems, and National Skills for Volunteers initiatives.

These initiatives involve substantial project development work with communities.

SFCS Budget adjustments 2002/03 and 2003/04 by initiative

	Original Allocation 2002/03 (\$m)	Adjustment 2002/03 (\$m)	Original Allocation 2003/04 (\$m)	Adjustment 2003/04 (\$m)
Stronger Families Fund	13.20	-4.13	17.20	-4.14
Early Intervention Parenting	14.70	-2.24	17.70	nil
Potential Leaders	11.30	-2.17	11.40	-1.20
Local Solutions to Local Problems	4.60	-0.88	4.60	-0.63
National Skills for Volunteers	3.00	-0.58	3.00	-0.53
		-10.00		-6.50

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Output Group: 1.1

Question No: 62

Topic: Australian Council on Children and Parenting – Projects/Issues

Hansard Page: CA 108

Senator Collins asked:

What are the projects or issues that the Australian Council for Children and Parenting is working on?

Answer:

Since its establishment in February 2001, the Australian Council for Children and Parenting has worked on:

- raising the awareness of the importance of early childhood development;
- building capacity amongst people working to support young children;
- developing a national agenda for children;
- prevention of child abuse and neglect.

The campaign ‘**A Happy Childhood Lasts a Lifetime**’ was launched on 19 September 2001. The campaign features posters and brochures highlighting the importance of early childhood. The campaign is aimed at parents and carers responsible for children under 5.

The second biennial **National Child Abuse Prevention Awards** were presented on Wednesday 21 November 2001, in conjunction with the 8th Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.

The Council has now been asked to give priority to:

- identifying ways that proven programs and projects can be sustained and developed in the long term, ensuring value for money;
- the need for a process for monitoring child abuse prevention services and the implications of changing policies for the safety and welfare of children;
- new approaches for considering early childhood.

The Council will also continue to work on a communication strategy, including a national campaign, an awards program, a website and newsletter.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 63

Topic: Australian Council on Children and Parenting – Minutes

Hansard Page: CA 108

Senator Collins asked:

Can you supply the minutes of the Australian Council for Children and Parenting meetings?

Answer:

The minutes of the Australian Council for Children and Parenting are considered to be working documents of the Council.

Attached are copies of the ACCAP Newsletter (No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4), which provides information about ACCAP and its activities. The Newsletters are also available on the ACCAP web site - www.accap-aus.org

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 64

Topic: Men and Family Relationships

Hansard Page: CA 109

Senator Denman asked:

Can you give us an evaluation of the Men and Family Relationships project up to date?

Answer:

Attached is the Interim Report (of November 2001) for the Evaluation of the Men and Family Relationships Initiative.

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**EVALUATION OF THE MEN AND FAMILY
RELATIONSHIPS INITIATIVE**

INTERIM REPORT

NOVEMBER 2001

[Note: the full report has not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

Clare O'Brien & Karen Rich

Phoenix Projects

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee
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Output Group: 1.1

Question No: 65

Topic: Services for Families with Children - Expenditure

Hansard Page: CA 111

Senator Denman asked:

Can you provide details of the proposed breakdown of expenditure of the \$7.9 million for services for families with children?

Answer:

Details of expenditure for **Services for Families with Children** for **2002-03** are still being finalised, however the majority of the projects funded in 2001-02 are contracted to be continued in 2002-03.

In **2001-02**, the Services for Families with Children appropriation was \$8,297,000. And the following table details the estimated split of expenditure.

Program	2001-02
Playgroup Associations (including recurrent funding, one-off funding for marketing/research/media projects and innovative projects undertaken by the Playgroup Council of Australia Inc)	\$2,508,590
Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies	\$2,644,968
Australian Council on Children and Parenting	\$450,000
Other Family Services (including activities in the areas of health, welfare, education and child care)	\$2,693,442
TOTAL	\$8,297,000

NOTE:

The Services for Families with Children (Specific Purpose Payment) appropriation was \$360,000 in 2001-02 and it is anticipated it will be fully expended. The funding goes to the governments of New South Wales and Western Australia for Other Family Services projects.

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Output Group: 1.1

Question No: 34

Topic: Services for Families with Children

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

34(a) Please provide details of the proposed breakdown of expenditure of the \$7.9m for “services for families with children”.

34(b) Are there any plans for growth in the Playgroup area, or for other children’s services types to be funded?

Answer:

34(a)

Details of expenditure for **Services for Families with Children** for **2002-03** are still being finalised, however the majority of the projects funded in 2001-02 are contracted to be continued in 2002-03.

In **2001-02**, the Services for Families with Children appropriation was \$8,297,000. And the following table details the estimated split of expenditure.

Program	2001-02
Playgroup Associations (including recurrent funding, one-off funding for marketing/research/media projects and innovative projects undertaken by the Playgroup Council of Australia Inc)	\$2,508,590
Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies	\$2,644,968
Australian Council on Children and Parenting	\$450,000
Other Family Services (including activities in the areas of health, welfare, education and child care)	\$2,693,442
TOTAL	\$8,297,000

NOTE:

The Services for Families with Children (Specific Purpose Payment) appropriation was \$360,000 in 2001-02 and it is anticipated it will be fully expended. The funding goes to the governments of New South Wales and Western Australia for Other Family Services projects.

34(b)

In addition to funding for playgroups within Services for Families with Children, funding has been provided under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy to support playgroups, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

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Output Group: 1.1

Question No: 66

Topic: Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies (AICCAs)

Hansard Page: CA 111

Senator Collins asked:

Can you provide a list of all the programs funded under Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies (AICCAs)?

Answer:

Sixteen services currently receive funding under Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies (AICCAs).

Legal Name of Organisation	Short Name/Trading Name	Alternative Names (e.g. name of service)	State/Territory
Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agency Mount Isa and District Inc	Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agency Mount Isa and District Inc	Mt Isa AICCA	QLD
Aboriginal Children's Service Ltd	Aboriginal Children's Service Ltd	Emergency Accommodation Redfern	NSW
Aboriginal Family Support Services Inc	Aboriginal Family Support Services Inc	AFSS	SA
Bargumar Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Corporation	Bargumar Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Corporation	Karbul Indigenous Placement Agency	QLD
Caloundra & District Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation	Caloundra & District Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation	Sunshine Coast Aboriginal & Islander Child Protection Service	QLD
Central Australian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Inc (currently under review)	Central Australian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Inc		NT
Central Queensland Aboriginal & Islanders Child Care Agency Inc	Central Queensland Aboriginal & Islanders Child Care Agency Inc	Central Queensland AICCA	QLD

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Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre Inc	Coffs Harbour Aboriginal Family Community Care Centre Inc	Coffs Harbour Family Community Care Centre	NSW
Interim Sponsor - Queensland Department of Families		Cairns AICCA	QLD
Interim Sponsor - Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service Ltd			QLD
Kalwun Development Corporation Ltd	Kalwun Development Corporation Ltd	Kalwun Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agency	QLD
Logan City Housing and Development Company Ltd	Logan City Housing and Development Company Ltd	Indigenous Child and Family Services	QLD
The Aboriginal & Islander Community Health Service Brisbane Ltd	The Aboriginal & Islander Community Health Service Brisbane Ltd	Indigenous Family and Child Support Service	QLD
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Co-op Ltd	Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Co-op Ltd		VIC
WE CARE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service for Aged and Disabled Association Inc	WE CARE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service for Aged and Disabled Association Inc	Kidz Care	QLD
Yorganop Childcare Aboriginal Corporation	Yorganop Childcare Aboriginal Corporation		WA

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 45

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

- a) Has the Department received comments/complaints about difficulties in understanding the family payments system?
- b) What are the most common complaints about the system?

Answer:

- a) & b) The majority of family assistance customers contacting the Department are seeking to understand the operation of the end of year reconciliation process, and its application in their case. Customers raising these issues are provided with additional guidance on advising Centrelink of their income estimates. Customers are also provided with information explaining how their income affects their entitlement and that the reconciliation process ensures that customers receive exactly the same amount of assistance, regardless of their choice of delivery method.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 46

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

Is the Department considering simplifying the system so that families can calculate and understand their entitlement?

Answer:

An online Family Assistance Entitlement estimator was implemented on 16 May 2002. This facility allows families to obtain an estimate of their Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit entitlements from the Family Assistance Office website. The facility will automatically estimate and display a family's entitlement based on the details they provide.

The Family Assistance Office website also allows customers to obtain information about eligibility for family assistance and update their family income estimate on-line.

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FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2002-2003 Budget Estimates, 3 June 2002

Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 52

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

At the time the Keating Government introduced the Maternity Allowance it was set at the level of six weeks of the basic rate of pension with some indication that it would later be increased to equal 12 weeks of the pension to give all women some level of parity with Commonwealth public servants. Why has it not yet been raised to this level?

Answer:

When Maternity Allowance was introduced on 1 February 1996, the amount was set at three times the maximum fortnightly rate of the indexed Parenting Allowance, now called Parenting Payment Partnered (PPP). From 1 January 1998 Maternity Allowance has been provided in two instalments: as Maternity Allowance (MAT), a lump sum paid at around the time of the birth of a baby; and as Maternity Immunisation Allowance (MIA), a lump sum paid after the child turned eighteen months of age upon proof of age, appropriate immunisation or a valid exemption. The adequacy of MAT and MIA is maintained by benchmarking the overall value of the combined payments against the indexed rate of PPP. The current rates are \$798.72 for MAT and \$208 for MIA.

Since Maternity Allowance was introduced, families have benefited from substantial increases to family payments (Family Tax Benefit and Child Care Benefit), and more recently the Baby Bonus, which offer further assistance to families with the costs of having and raising children.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 40

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) What assessments have been made about the likelihood of debts for this financial year (2001-2002) given that the tolerance will not apply this year and the system is unchanged?
- b) Are the numbers of families affected expected to be the same? If not, why not?
- c) Has a final assessment been made of the total amount of FTB and CCB that will be recouped following reconciliation for this year 2000-01? What is the amount? If not, when will this be available?

Answer:

- a) & b) The Family Assistance Office has been actively helping families to avoid or minimise family assistance overpayments resulting from their underestimations of their income through a range of communications with customers regarding the income estimation process. At this stage the extent to which customer estimates of their 2001-02 income for FTB and CCB purposes align with their actual taxable incomes for the year cannot be precisely determined. As with all such efforts, the final result will only be known following comparison of customer's estimates and their final actual taxable incomes. This will not be available until after reconciliation.
- c) The amount of recoverable overpayments currently stands at \$199 million. A final assessment is not possible until after the conclusion of the financial year.

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FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO
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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 41

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Re. The February 2002 National Print Advertisement campaign:

- (a) What is the total cost of the campaign to date? What will be the final cost of this campaign?
- (b) Since February 2002, have there been any further proposals for reform developed and have they been put to the Minister? What are the nature of any changes?

Answer:

- (a) The total cost of that campaign to date is approximately \$305,000. This is expected to be the final cost.
- (b) It would be inappropriate to comment on policy options and advice to Government.

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2002-2003 Budget Estimates, 3 June 2002

Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 42

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked:

- a) How many families in total claimed Family Tax Benefit in respect to 2000 - 2001;
- b) How many families claimed their payments fortnightly;
- c) How many families chose to claim their payments through the tax system as (a) a lump sum; and (b) tax instalment reductions;
- d) What was the total dollar value of the Family Tax Benefit payments claimed through the respective payment methods?

Answer:

- a) Centrelink records show that 1,937,047 customers successfully claimed Part A and 1,358,413 customers successfully claimed Family Tax Benefit Part B as fortnightly payments. It is estimated that a further 80,688 customers have successfully claimed Family Tax Benefit through the tax system in respect of 2000-01.
- b) As noted above, Centrelink records show that 1,937,047 customers received Family Tax Benefit Part A and 1,358,413 customers received Family Tax Benefit Part B as fortnightly payments.
- c) Australian Taxation Office records show that 77,688 customers have so far been paid lump sum claims for Family Tax Benefit through the tax system and it is estimated that around 3,000 customers received Family Tax Benefit as reduced tax withholdings.
- d) During 2000-01, \$10.1 billion in fortnightly FTB payments was paid by Centrelink. During 2001-02, a further \$0.2 billion has been paid out by Centrelink in respect of 2000-01 entitlements. The Australian Taxation Office has paid out a further \$0.3 billion in respect of 2000-2001.

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FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO
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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 43

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Disregarding for the moment the \$1000 waiver announced by the Government:

- a) How many overpayments in relation to Family Tax Benefit have been detected through the reconciliation process?
- b) How far progressed is the reconciliation process as a proportion of all families who you would expect to be subject to reconciliation (80%, 90%)? And when do you expect all reconciliations to be completed?
- c) In relation to these overpayments what is the total \$ value?
- d) What is the average value of the overpayments?
- e) Could you please provide (perhaps on notice) the distribution of these overpayments – say in \$100 bands?
- f) Could you also provide an indication of what proportion of the overpayments can be attributed to certain events or family types: (eg: under-estimate of earned income, shared care, maintenance payments, a dependent child earning more than the permitted earnings, FAO/Centrelink error)
- g) Is there a breakdown available as to the number and amount of overpayment than is attributable to both FTB part A and FTB part B?

Now if we take into account the impact of the \$1000 tolerance:

- h) How many debts for Family Tax Benefit have been detected through the reconciliation process *after* the application of the \$1000 waiver?
- i) What is the total \$ value of Family Tax Benefit debts which have been sought after the application of the \$1000 waiver?
- j) What is the average value of the residual Family Tax Benefit debts?
- k) Could you provide (perhaps on notice) the distribution of these debts – say in \$100 bands?
- l) Is there a breakdown available as to the number and amount of debts that are attributable to FTB part A and FTB part B?

Answer:

The latest available verified figures are:

- a) 607,100
- b) The great majority of all families who could be expected to be subject to reconciliation have been reconciled. Around 300,000 customers (some 15 percent) have been contacted and advised to lodge a tax return or to advise Centrelink that they are not required to lodge a tax return. The reconciliation process is expected to be completed early in the next financial year for customers who lodge tax returns by 30 June 2002.

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- c) \$512 million
- d) \$843
- e)

Overpayment	Customers	Overpayment	Customers	Overpayment	Customers
\$1 -\$49	78,580	\$3,301 - \$3,400	1,424	\$6,801 - \$6,900	105
\$50 -\$99	50,083	\$3,401 - \$3,500	1,354	\$6,901 - \$7,000	114
\$100 - \$199	65,598	\$3,501 - \$3,600	1,406	\$7,001 - \$7,100	78
\$200 - \$299	46,887	\$3,601 - \$3,700	1,218	\$7,101 - \$7,200	74
\$300 - \$399	38,150	\$3,701 - \$3,800	1,042	\$7,201 - \$7,300	78
\$400 - \$499	32,699	\$3,801 - \$3,900	1,044	\$7,301 - \$7,400	84
\$500 - \$599	28,268	\$3,901 - \$4,000	870	\$7,401 - \$7,500	63
\$600 - \$699	24,765	\$4,001 - \$4,100	871	\$7,501 - \$7,600	61
\$700 - \$799	22,767	\$4,101 - \$4,200	1,383	\$7,601 - \$7,700	65
\$800 - \$899	20,024	\$4,201 - \$4,300	706	\$7,701 - \$7,800	62
\$900 - \$999	25,048	\$4,301 - \$4,400	664	\$7,801 - \$7,900	48
\$1,000 - \$1,049	8,059	\$4,401 - \$4,500	599	\$7,901 - \$8,000	52
\$1,050 - \$1,100	7,678	\$4,501 - \$4,600	655	\$8,001 - \$8,100	38
\$1,101 - \$1,200	14,080	\$4,601 - \$4,700	716	\$8,101 - \$8,200	46
\$1,201 - \$1,300	12,331	\$4,701 - \$4,800	474	\$8,201 - \$8,300	53
\$1,301 - \$1,400	11,535	\$4,801 - \$4,900	430	\$8,301 - \$8,400	34
\$1,401 - \$1,500	9,680	\$4,901 - \$5,000	432	\$8,401 - \$8,500	35
\$1,501 - \$1,600	9,354	\$5,001 - \$5,100	351	\$8,501 - \$8,600	39
\$1,601 - \$1,700	8,308	\$5,101 - \$5,200	313	\$8,601 - \$8,700	32
\$1,701 - \$1,800	7,742	\$5,201 - \$5,300	317	\$8,701 - \$8,800	53

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\$1,801 - \$1,900	7,985	\$5,301 - \$5,400	289	\$8,801 - \$8,900	25
\$1,901 - \$2,000	13,073	\$5,401 - \$5,500	289	\$8,901 - \$9,000	25
\$2,001 - \$2,100	5,872	\$5,501 - \$5,600	284	\$9,001 - \$9,100	31
\$2,101 - \$2,200	4,578	\$5,601 - \$5,700	275	\$9,101 - \$9,200	38
\$2,201 - \$2,300	4,457	\$5,701 - \$5,800	221	\$9,201 - \$9,300	28
\$2,301 - \$2,400	3,790	\$5,801 - \$5,900	181	\$9,301 - \$9,400	26
\$2,401 - \$2,500	3,370	\$5,901 - \$6,000	231	\$9,401 - \$9,500	10
\$2,501 - \$2,600	3,099	\$6,001 - \$6,100	204	\$9,501 - \$9,600	17
\$2,601 - \$2,700	3,639	\$6,101 - \$6,200	239	\$9,601 - \$9,700	11
\$2,701 - \$2,800	2,615	\$6,201 - \$6,300	171	\$9,701 - \$9,800	11
\$2,801 - \$2,900	2,586	\$6,301 - \$6,400	150	\$9,801 - \$9,900	17
\$2,901 - \$3,000	4,017	\$6,401 - \$6,500	125	\$9,901 - \$10,000	13
\$3,001 - \$3,100	1,873	\$6,501 - \$6,600	129	\$10,000 - PLUS	198
\$3,101 - \$3,200	1,783	\$6,601 - \$6,700	123	TOTAL	607,100
\$3,201 - \$3,300	1,699	\$6,701 - \$6,800	184		

f) It is not possible to provide a breakdown of overpayments by the event which led to the overpayment, however the three major categories are family income for FTB Part A, secondary income earner for FTB Part B and maintenance (child support) income.

g) No. Overpayments are only recorded in relation to Family Tax Benefit.

h) 174,231

i) \$193 million

j) \$1109

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k)

Overpayment	Customers	Overpayment	Customers	Overpayment	Customers
\$1 -\$49	8,059	\$3,001 - \$3,100	871	\$6,101 - \$6,200	74
\$50 -\$99	7,678	\$3,101 - \$3,200	1,383	\$6,201 - \$6,300	78
\$100 - \$199	14,080	\$3,201 - \$3,300	706	\$6,301 - \$6,400	84
\$200 - \$299	12,331	\$3,301 - \$3,400	664	\$6,401 - \$6,500	63
\$300 - \$399	11,535	\$3,401 - \$3,500	599	\$6,501 - \$6,600	61
\$400 - \$499	9,680	\$3,501 - \$3,600	655	\$6,601 - \$6,700	65
\$500 - \$599	9,354	\$3,601 - \$3,700	716	\$6,701 - \$6,800	62
\$600 - \$699	8,308	\$3,701 - \$3,800	474	\$6,801 - \$6,900	48
\$700 - \$799	7,742	\$3,801 - \$3,900	430	\$6,901 - \$7,000	52
\$800 - \$899	7,985	\$3,901 - \$4,000	432	\$7,001 - \$7,100	38
\$900 - \$999	13,073	\$4,001 - \$4,100	351	\$7,101 - \$7,200	46
\$1,000 - \$1,100	5,872	\$4,101 - \$4,200	313	\$7,201 - \$7,300	53
\$1,101 - \$1,200	4,578	\$4,201 - \$4,300	317	\$7,301 - \$7,400	34
\$1,201 - \$1,300	4,457	\$4,301 - \$4,400	289	\$7,401 - \$7,500	35
\$1,301 - \$1,400	3,790	\$4,401 - \$4,500	289	\$7,501 - \$7,600	39
\$1,401 - \$1,500	3,370	\$4,501 - \$4,600	284	\$7,601 - \$7,700	32
\$1,501 - \$1,600	3,099	\$4,601 - \$4,700	275	\$7,701 - \$7,800	53
\$1,601 - \$1,700	3,639	\$4,701 - \$4,800	221	\$7,801 - \$7,900	25
\$1,701 - \$1,800	2,615	\$4,801 - \$4,900	181	\$7,901 - \$8,000	25
\$1,801 - \$1,900	2,586	\$4,901 - \$5,000	231	\$8,001 - \$8,100	31
\$1,901 - \$2,000	4,017	\$5,001 - \$5,100	204	\$8,101 - \$8,200	38

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\$2,001 - \$2,100	1,873	\$5,101 - \$5,200	239	\$8,201 - \$8,300	28
\$2,101 - \$2,200	1,783	\$5,201 - \$5,300	171	\$8,301 - \$8,400	26
\$2,201 - \$2,300	1,699	\$5,301 - \$5,400	150	\$8,401 - \$8,500	10
\$2,301 - \$2,400	1,424	\$5,401 - \$5,500	125	\$8,501 - \$8,600	17
\$2,401 - \$2,500	1,354	\$5,501 - \$5,600	129	\$8,601 - \$8,700	11
\$2,501 - \$2,600	1,406	\$5,601 - \$5,700	123	\$8,701 - \$8,800	11
\$2,601 - \$2,700	1,218	\$5,701 - \$5,800	184	\$8,801 - \$8,900	17
\$2,701 - \$2,800	1,042	\$5,801 - \$5,900	105	\$8,901 - \$9,000	13
\$2,801 - \$2,900	1,044	\$5,901 - \$6,000	114	\$9,001 - PLUS	198
\$2,901 - \$3,000	870	\$6,001 - \$6,100	78	TOTAL	174,231

1) No. Debts are only recorded in relation to Family Tax Benefit.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 44

Topic: Family Tax Benefit

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) How many positive adjustments to Family Tax Benefit payments (top-ups) have been paid to date?
- b) What is the total value of the FTB top-up payments paid to date?
- c) Could you provide the distribution of top-ups – say in \$100 bands?
- d) Is there a breakdown available as to the number and amount of top up payments that are attributable to FTB part A and FTB part B?

Answer:

The latest available verified figures are:

- a) 240,360
- b) \$231 million

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c)

Top Up	Customers	Top Up	Customers	Top Up	Customers
\$1 - \$100	47,902	\$3,401 - \$3,500	697	\$6,801 - \$6,900	66
\$101 - \$200	25,484	\$3,501 - \$3,600	768	\$6,901 - \$7,000	114
\$201 - \$300	19,196	\$3,601 - \$3,700	610	\$7,001 - \$7,100	76
\$301 - \$400	15,630	\$3,701 - \$3,800	554	\$7,101 - \$7,200	54
\$401 - \$500	12,912	\$3,801 - \$3,900	693	\$7,201 - \$7,300	62
\$501 - \$600	11,305	\$3,901 - \$4,000	562	\$7,301 - \$7,400	58
\$601 - \$700	9,609	\$4,001 - \$4,100	498	\$7,401 - \$7,500	48
\$701 - \$800	8,452	\$4,101 - \$4,200	899	\$7,501 - \$7,600	59
\$801 - \$900	7,348	\$4,201 - \$4,300	477	\$7,601 - \$7,700	32
\$901 - \$1,000	6,956	\$4,301 - \$4,400	386	\$7,701 - \$7,800	44
\$1,001 - \$1,100	6,226	\$4,401 - \$4,500	375	\$7,801 - \$7,900	33
\$1,101 - \$1,200	5,307	\$4,501 - \$4,600	382	\$7,901 - \$8,000	69
\$1,201 - \$1,300	4,640	\$4,601 - \$4,700	600	\$8,001 - \$8,100	29
\$1,301 - \$1,400	4,287	\$4,701 - \$4,800	343	\$8,101 - \$8,200	28
\$1,401 - \$1,500	3,869	\$4,801 - \$4,900	297	\$8,201 - \$8,300	45
\$1,501 - \$1,600	3,385	\$4,901 - \$5,000	394	\$8,301 - \$8,400	31
\$1,601 - \$1,700	3,382	\$5,001 - \$5,100	250	\$8,401 - \$8,500	32
\$1,701 - \$1,800	3,226	\$5,101 - \$5,200	252	\$8,501 - \$8,600	29
\$1,801 - \$1,900	4,980	\$5,201 - \$5,300	231	\$8,601 - \$8,700	22
\$1,901 - \$2,000	2,541	\$5,301 - \$5,400	204	\$8,701 - \$8,800	89
\$2,001 - \$2,100	2,965	\$5,401 - \$5,500	220	\$8,801 - \$8,900	17
\$2,101 -	1,833	\$5,501 -	181	\$8,901 -	16

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\$2,200		\$5,600		\$9,000	
\$2,201 - \$2,300	1,807	\$5,601 - \$5,700	188	\$9,001 - \$9,100	21
\$2,301 - \$2,400	1,686	\$5,701 - \$5,800	169	\$9,101 - \$9,200	10
\$2,401 - \$2,500	1,535	\$5,801 - \$5,900	134	\$9,201 - \$9,300	20
\$2,501 - \$2,600	1,636	\$5,901 - \$6,000	274	\$9,301 - \$9,400	11
\$2,601 - \$2,700	2,079	\$6,001 - \$6,100	155	\$9,401 - \$9,500	6
\$2,701 - \$2,800	1,163	\$6,101 - \$6,200	289	\$9,501 - \$9,600	18
\$2,801 - \$2,900	1,444	\$6,201 - \$6,300	121	\$9,601 - \$9,700	7
\$2,901 - \$3,000	1,011	\$6,301 - \$6,400	129	\$9,701 - \$9,800	6
\$3,001 - \$3,100	880	\$6,401 - \$6,500	126	\$9,801 - \$9,900	7
\$3,101 - \$3,200	856	\$6,501 - \$6,600	147	\$9,901 - \$10,000	7
\$3,201 - \$3,300	781	\$6,601 - \$6,700	122	\$10,000 - PLUS	103
\$3,301 - \$3,400	773	\$6,701 - \$6,800	278	TOTAL	240,360

d) No. Top up payments are only recorded in relation to Family Tax Benefit.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 47

Topic: Maternity Allowance

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

Has the Department received any representations/submissions from groups requesting it to consider extending the period of twelve months unpaid Maternity leave to twenty four months unpaid leave? What is the Department's views on this?

Answer:

Commonwealth responsibility for the issue of unpaid maternity leave sits within the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio. Therefore, representations or submissions in relation to unpaid maternity leave would be referred to that Department for consideration.

In the event of such a proposal being considered by Government, FaCS would expect to be consulted.

Policy advice being prepared for Ministers is not publicly available.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 48

Topic: Maternity Allowance

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

Has the Department considered the case for providing Maternity allowance to be paid to all mothers - not just those who resume paid work twelve months after the birth?

Answer:

Maternity Allowance is not restricted to mothers who resume paid work twelve months after the birth. Maternity Allowance is a means-tested lump sum payment paid for each newborn child in a family, including each baby in a multiple birth. Families who are eligible for Family Tax Benefit (part A) following the birth of a child qualify for Maternity Allowance. The majority of Australian families receive Maternity Allowance following the birth of a child.

Maternity Allowance can also be paid for adoptions, stillborn babies and babies who die shortly after birth. It aims to assist families with the costs incurred by them at that time. It is not linked to workplace participation before or after the birth of a child.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 49

Topic: Paid Maternity Leave

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

Has the Department considered the possible economic impact of compulsory paid maternity leave on small employers? How would this impact be addressed?

Answer:

The Department, in conjunction with other Commonwealth agencies, is monitoring public debate around paid maternity leave and considering the possible impacts of options being discussed in that context. The possible impacts of options on employers, including small employers, are being taken into consideration as part of that process.

Policy advice being prepared for Ministers is not publicly available.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 50

Topic: Paid Maternity Leave

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

Has the Department examined possible detrimental effects this may have on employment prospects of women of child bearing age? How would the Department guard against this?

Answer:

The Department, in conjunction with other Commonwealth agencies, is monitoring public debate around paid maternity leave and considering the possible impacts of options being discussed in that context. The extent to which various options for paid maternity leave might have a detrimental impact on the employment prospects for women of child-bearing age is being considered in assessing the various options raised in debate.

Policy advice being prepared for Ministers is not publicly available.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 51

Topic: Paid Maternity Leave

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

Does the Department have a policy of supporting all women equitably at the time of birth, not on the basis of by whom they are employed or whether they are in the paid workforce prior or after the birth?

Answer:

The Department administers government policies in accordance with the enabling legislation passed through the Parliament.

Maternity Allowance is a means-tested lump sum payment available to families following the birth of a child. The majority of Australian families with newborn children receive Maternity Allowance. It is not linked to workplace participation before or after the birth of a child.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 53

Topic: Paid Maternity Leave

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

Article 11 of CEDAW requires signatory nations to provide paid maternity leave or a comparable social benefit. What measures would the Department consider to constitute a comparable social benefit?

Answer:

Responsibility for reporting on Australia's commitment in relation to CEDAW rests with the Office of the Status of Women in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 39

Topic: Paid Maternity Leave`

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Has the Department been asked to cost the Paid Maternity Leave options produced in the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's draft report or any other options?

Who requested that costing work be carried out?

When are the costings expected to be completed?

Answer:

The Prime Minister has indicated that the Government is examining the issue of paid maternity leave and the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's Report, *Valuing Parenthood: Options for paid maternity leave – interim paper 2002*. The costs of various options are being assessed in that context.

FaCS is working with other Departments to assess the possible impacts and costs of options being put forward in the debate.

Policy advice being prepared for Ministers is not publicly available.

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2002-2003 Budget Estimates, 3 June 2002

Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 38

Topic: Policy and Research Advice (Paid Maternity Leave)

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

It is understood that the Department has been asked by the Prime Minister to provide detailed costings and options for a government funded Paid Maternity Leave scheme.

- Can the Department provide any outcomes of this work to date, and the source data being used to develop the costings and options?
- What are the different options being costed? How many options are being considered?
- When is this work going to be completed, and when can we get a copy?
- What further work is the Department undertaking in this area?
- What Branch/area within the Department is responsible for this?

Answer:

FaCS, together with other Departments, is monitoring the current public debate on Paid Maternity Leave and assessing the implications, including possible costs, of various proposals being put forward in that context. This work is part of the normal role of Departments to liaise on issues with potential policy implications and to provide information to Ministers accordingly.

Policy advice being prepared for Ministers is not publicly available.

Family Policy Branch is coordinating this work in the Department.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 54

Topic: Paid Maternity Leave

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

What activities and measures has the Department undertaken/implemented to raise the visibility and status of parenting – as part of a strategy to arrest the declining birthrate?

Answer:

Government policies administered by FaCS support families in the decisions they make about having and raising children. These policies support people who make a range of choices about how to balance their parenting responsibilities, through care and work arrangements.

For example, the Department administers a range of family relationships and parenting support programs to help provide a better environment for raising children. These include:

- The Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, which focuses on early intervention and prevention initiatives to help strengthen and support Australian families;
- The Family Relationships Services Program, which provides funding for about 100 community organisations to provide family relationship services through 400 outlets around the country;
- The Child Abuse Prevention Program, which provides funding for 41 projects to prevent child abuse by promoting positive parenting and helping families cope with the different demands of raising children; and
- The Indigenous Parenting and Family Wellbeing Initiative, which recognises and promotes the importance of strong families among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In February 2001 the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs established the Australian Council for Children and Parenting to provide advice on parenting including issues of child abuse and neglect. In the last 12 months, the Council has conducted a small, successful parenting campaign to promote the importance of the early years.

The Government has not introduced policies with the express purpose of arresting the declining birthrate.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 55

Topic: Paid Maternity Leave

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

Is the Department aware of a recent study by Mariah Evans and Johnathan Kelly which showed that in 2001 “71% of Australian mothers believe they should not work before their children start primary school. Only two per cent think it is acceptable for mothers of pre schoolers to work full-time”. Has the Department taken this or similar research into account when advising the government on family policy?

Answer:

The Department is aware of research undertaken by Mariah Evans and Jonathan Kelly into public attitudes to maternal employment.

The Department takes a range of research and analysis into account when advising the government on family policy.

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ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
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2002-2003 Budget Estimates, 3 June 2002

Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 35

Topic: Early Childhood Development

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked: Please provide an update on progress of the Departmental Task Force on Child Development, Health and Well Being and its relationship to the new Australian Research Alliance on Children and Youth.

Answer:

- The Taskforce on Child Development, Health and Well Being is developing options for a whole-of-government approach to improving early childhood outcomes.
- It is strengthening collaboration and coordination between departments on existing programs relevant to early childhood, for example, it is collaborating on the development of the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children.
- It is also jointly contributing funds to the establishment of the Australian Research Alliance on Children and Youth. Four department members of the Task Force have contributed funds: Family and Community Services (\$200,000); Attorney-General's (\$200,000); Education, Science and Training (\$100,000); and Health and Ageing (\$100,000). This funding will help strengthen linkages between research findings and the development of policy.

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Output Group: 1.1 Stronger Families

Question No: 93

Topic: Child Care Benefit

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Given that final figures were not available in February 2002, please provide updated figures on the following:

- a) In 2000-2001 how many families claimed Child Care Benefit (CCB) as a fee reduction on a fortnightly basis?
- b) How many families decided to claim their CCB for 2000-2001 as a lump sum through the tax system?
- c) What was the total \$ value of CCB claimed through each of these payment methods?

Answer:

a) The latest verified figures show that 592,000 families claimed Child Care Benefit as a fee reduction over the course of the 2000-2001 financial year.

b) 15,774 families have claimed CCB as a lump sum for 2000-2001 through the Family Assistance Office according to the latest verified figures.

Eligible families must lodge CCB lump sum claims for the 2000-2001 financial year with the Family Assistance Office by 28 June 2002. The Department has run a publicity campaign in May/June 2002 to remind as many families as possible of the deadline. The campaign involved distributing posters to approved child care services for display and placing an advertisement in various major metropolitan newspapers.

c) According to the latest verified figures, the total CCB claimed for 2000-2001 was:

Fee Reduction: \$1,037,137,000

Lump Sum: \$5,347,750

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 36

Topic: UN Children's Summit and Special Session

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

UN Children's Summit and Special Session, May 2002, New York – please provide following details:

36(a) Can we get a copy of the official report from the Australian Government representatives at this event?

36(b) Who was in the official delegation from the Government, including Departmental officers and other?

36(c) Where else did they visit in conjunction with this trip?

36(d) What initiatives came from this? Any Australian commitments made at the Summit or Special Session?

36(e) Minister Anthony said in a press release and speech that Indigenous children still fare much worse than other Australian children - what action is being taken by the Department to address this?

36(f) Minister Anthony also visited early childhood development experts in Canada – what commitments or undertakings have been made in this area by the Minister?

36(g) Minister Anthony has referred to a "Parenting and police proposal" that he visited in the States and is thinking of implementing here – what developmental work has been done around this – what funding is available for this sort of proposal – are State and Territory Police Departments being consulted?

Answer:

36(a)

The official report from the Australian Government representatives has not yet been finalised.

36(b)

Attached is a copy of the Delegation List.

36(c)

- In the week before the UN Special Session the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Larry Anthony), his Chief of Staff and the Executive Director, Families, Department of Family and Community Services, visited Canada (Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal) to meet with experts in the field of early childhood. During their time in New York, the Minister, his Chief of Staff and the Executive Director, Families met with a number of organisations to discuss issues relating to early childhood.

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36(d)

Overall, the outcomes from the United Nations Special Session on Children were very positive. Representatives from over 170 nations gathered to discuss issues relating to children and assess achievements since the Children's Summit, which was held in 1990.

Australia joined others in adopting the Outcome document, which focuses on four key priorities: promoting healthy lives; providing quality education; protecting against abuse; exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS. This is backed up by 21 specific goals and targets for child health, education and protection over the next decade. A copy of the final Outcome document 'A World Fit for Children' has been provided for information.

[Note: the report has not been included in the electronic/printed volume]

36(e)

Issues relating to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous children are complex. However, the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments are working to address key areas of disadvantage through practical approaches in the areas of health, education, employment, housing and family support.

FaCS provides significant funding for Indigenous children. This includes

- some \$24m for child care services specifically targeting Indigenous families and children
- \$1.7m per annum for the Indigenous Parenting and Family Wellbeing program
- some four projects for Indigenous communities totalling \$740,000 funded under the Early Intervention Parenting initiative
- funding for Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agencies; and
- at least \$20m over four years allocated through Stronger Families and Communities Strategy to Indigenous projects to address the needs of young people and communities.

In addition, the cross-portfolio Task Force on Child Development, Health and Well Being chaired by the Department recently established a working group to look specifically at the range of Indigenous early childhood programs and services delivered by the Commonwealth and how they can be better integrated and coordinated across portfolios. The Working Group's membership includes DEST, Health and ATSI as well as FaCS.

36(f)

The Minister did not make any undertakings or commitments to the people he visited in Canada.

36(g)

One of the organisations visited by Minister Anthony in New York was the 'I am Your Child Foundation'. The organisation discussed that the fact that they had been able to enlist the support of Police Commissioners in talking to legislators and politicians about the importance of early childhood and children's outcomes. There was no concrete proposal discussed.

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Attachment A

UNGA Special Session on Children – Delegation List

Government Representatives

The Hon Larry Anthony, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Head of Delegation)
Mr John Dauth, Australian Ambassador to the UN (Alternate Head of Delegation)
Mr Mark Sullivan, Secretary, Dept of Family and Community Services
Ms Robyn McKay, Executive Director, Families Cluster, Family and Community Services
Mr David Stuart, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN (DFAT)
Ms Amanda Davies, Assistant Secretary, Civil Justice Division, Attorney-General's Department
Ms Gillian Mellsoy, Director, UN and Commonwealth Section, AusAID
Ms Robyn Mudie, First Secretary, UN New York (DFAT)
Ms Susan Ivatts, UN and Commonwealth Section, AusAID
Mr Guy O'Brien, Second Secretary, UN New York (DFAT)

Parliamentary Delegates

Senator Brian Harradine
Senator The Hon Rosemary Crowley

Advisers

Mrs Rosemary Sinclair
Ms Ruth Gibson, Chief of Staff, Minister Anthony's Office
Dr Sev Ozdowski, Human Rights Commissioner, HREOC
Mr Mark Palu, AusAID Counsellor, UN New York
Ms Lisa Brice, AusAID Support Officer, UN New York

Youth Delegates and Chaperone

Ms Kirsten Hagon (UN Youth Association of Australia representative)
Mr Tim Goodwin (under-18 representative)
Miss Emily Simpson (under-18 representative)
Ms Sue Conde (chaperone)

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 37

Topic: Early Childhood Development

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked: Larry Anthony announced on Sunday 2 June 2002 that the Government would be providing funding to the Institute of Child Health Research to develop a database about “every aspect of childhood development”.

It has been reported that \$600,000 will be provided for this initiative – where is the funding from and was this included in the recent Budget measures?

Can the Department provide details about what the outcomes will be from this seed funding.

What other parties are involved in this project and what is the proposed timeframe for the initial stage (i.e. developmental work)?

What involvement will the Department’s policy area have in the ongoing development of this work?

When is it proposed that the National database (estimated at \$10m cost) will be up and running?

Answer:

- Funding is being provided to the Alliance from the following sources:
 - \$200,000 from the National Child Protection Program, Department of Family and Community Services
 - \$200,000 from the National Crime Prevention Program, Attorney-General’s Department;
 - \$100,000 from the Corporate Research and Evaluation Program, Department of Education, Science and Training; and
 - \$100,000 out of base funding from under Outcome 1 - Population Health and Safety, Department of Health and Ageing.

- This funding comes from 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04 program funds and therefore was not part of recent Budget measures. It is not to fund the development of a national database.

- The Commonwealth funding agreement requires the funds to be used towards:
 - establishing the Alliance infrastructure including a national office, governing mechanisms and a communication strategy;
 - developing a nationally agreed research agenda with identified priorities;
 - establishing a comprehensive national network of Alliance members including all disciplines with an interest in children and youth; and
 - establishing formal linkages between the Alliance and Commonwealth policy development.

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- The Commonwealth funding agreement runs until January 2004 when it is expected most of the initial establishment activities will be completed. It is understood that the Alliance may have

also secured funds and/or in-kind assistance from CSIRO, the WA Government, the WA Lotteries Commission and a number of philanthropic organisations for other aspects of their work.

- As the Department is a key stakeholder in both the setting of research agendas and in the translation of research to policy and programs, the Alliance will need to maintain a collaborative relationship with the Department as part of its ongoing work.
- The Department is not currently funding the Alliance to establish a national database. In addition to announcing the Government's seed-funding of the Alliance, the Minister's press release of 2 June 2002 described some of the outcomes the Alliance hopes to achieve. Details of the timing for a national database are not known.

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 94

Topic: Child Care Benefits

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Disregard for the moment the \$1,000 waiver announced by the Government:

- a) How many **overpayments** in relation to Child Care Benefit have been detected through the reconciliation process?
- b) How far progressed is the reconciliation process for Child Care Benefit as a proportion of all families who claim CCB (80%, 90%)?
- c) When are CCB notices on overpayments due to be posted?
- d) If there are delays to the reconciliation of CCB, what are they and when do you expect all will be completed?
- e) In relation to these **overpayments** what is the total \$ value?
- f) Could you please provide the distribution of these **overpayments** – say in \$100 bands?

Answer:

- a) According to the latest verified figures, 150,585 overpayments have been detected through the reconciliation process.
- b) 96,001 reconciliations are pending according to the latest verified figures. This represents approximately 15.5% of all families who claimed CCB as a fee reduction in 2000/2001.
- c) The top-up, overpayment or nil adjustment letters for families have been or will be sent as soon as their claim has been reconciled.
- d) Reconciliation of CCB claims cannot occur until (i) services submit all child care usage information for the 2000/2001 financial year, and (ii) verification of income is received from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). The ATO cannot verify income until a tax return is submitted by the individual and the individual's partner, if they have one. The reconciliation process is expected to be finalised early in the next financial year for customers for whom all relevant information is received.
- e) The total \$ value of CCB overpayments is \$38,314,191 according to the latest verified figures.
- f) The distribution of these overpayments in \$50 bands is set out in the table below.

AMOUNT OF OVERPAYMENT	NUMBER	TOTAL AMOUNT
\$0 - \$49	54,352	1,049,051.83
\$50 - \$99	22,155	1,610,340.75
\$100 - \$149	14,143	1,743,716.28
\$150 - \$199	10,057	1,747,954.52

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\$200 - \$249	7,531	1,684,665.18
\$250 - \$299	6,074	1,664,814.17
\$300 - \$349	4,768	1,544,851.49
\$350 - \$399	3,924	1,468,529.65
\$400 - \$449	3,322	1,409,765.26
\$450 - \$499	2,679	1,270,713.73
\$500 - \$549	2,379	1,246,608.08
\$550 - \$599	1,952	1,121,262.77
\$600 - \$649	1,870	1,166,814.89
\$650 - \$699	1,500	1,012,453.50
\$700 - \$749	1,425	1,032,072.88
\$750 - \$799	1,162	900,122.03
\$800 - \$849	1,017	838,649.36
\$850 - \$899	968	846,270.81
\$900 - \$949	819	756,770.88
\$950 - \$999	755	735,747.28
\$1000 - \$1049	684	700,739.29
\$1050 - \$1099	579	622,397.39
\$1100 - \$1149	483	543,189.19
\$1150 - \$1199	451	529,780.12
\$1200 - \$1249	369	451,769.44
\$1250 - \$1299	380	484,510.44
\$1300 - \$1349	359	475,534.91
\$1350 - \$1399	305	419,105.59
\$1400 - \$1449	272	388,009.95
\$1450 - \$1499	283	417,666.30
\$1500 - \$1549	222	338,644.14
\$1550 - \$1599	238	374,648.14
\$1600 - \$1649	218	353,977.78
\$1650 - \$1699	196	328,474.64
\$1700 - \$1749	153	263,963.96
\$1750 - \$1799	168	298,090.30
\$1800 - \$1849	142	259,334.37
\$1850 - \$1899	137	257,169.05
\$1900 - \$1949	126	242,290.65
\$1950 - \$1999	123	242,619.52
\$2000 - \$2049	104	210,713.77
\$2050 - \$2099	105	217,654.13
\$2100 - \$2149	102	216,694.24
\$2150 - \$2199	75	163,035.14
\$2200 - \$2249	92	204,735.97
\$2250 - \$2299	65	147,850.55
\$2300 - \$2349	79	183,800.20
\$2350 - \$2399	82	194,695.02
\$2400 - \$2449	66	160,088.80

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\$2450 - \$2499	45	111,248.20
\$2500 - \$2549	62	156,559.48
\$2550 - \$2599	56	144,205.29
\$2600 - \$2649	47	123,401.94
\$2650 - \$2699	45	120,462.51
\$2700 - \$2749	47	128,168.46
\$2750 - \$2799	37	102,783.77
\$2800 - \$2849	34	95,816.54
\$2850 - \$2899	44	126,592.70
\$2900 - \$2949	34	99,479.52
\$2950 - \$2999	25	74,632.43
\$3000 - \$3049	25	75,670.82
\$3050 - \$3099	31	95,218.54
\$3100 - \$3149	21	65,596.04
\$3150 - \$3199	30	95,327.52
\$3200 - \$3249	21	67,561.88
\$3250 - \$3299	19	62,249.02
\$3300 - \$3349	21	69,710.78
\$3350 - \$3399	33	111,335.01
\$3400 - \$3449	17	58,322.85
\$3450 - \$3499	15	52,156.39
\$3500 - \$3549	19	66,991.85
\$3550 - \$3599	22	78,658.69
\$3600 - \$3649	9	32,631.52
\$3650 - \$3699	10	36,765.24
\$3700 - \$3749	7	26,010.68
\$3750 - \$3799	11	41,567.99
\$3800 - \$3849	15	57,390.80
\$3850 - \$3899	9	34,816.22
\$3900 - \$3949	15	58,860.93
\$3950 - \$3999	14	55,589.56
\$4000 - \$4049	13	52,391.14
\$4050 - \$4099	6	24,401.23
\$4100 - \$4149	9	37,080.91
\$4150 - \$4199	4	16,732.10
\$4200 - \$4249	8	33,837.54
\$4250 - \$4299	11	46,949.30
\$4300 - \$4349	8	34,603.35
\$4350 - \$4399	3	13,151.79
\$4400 - \$4449	5	22,096.69
\$4450 - \$4499	7	31,299.35
\$4500 - \$4549	11	49,693.65
\$4550 - \$4599	4	18,366.11
\$4600 - \$4649	7	32,433.76
\$4650 - \$4699	5	23,392.08

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\$4700 - \$4749	5	23,610.70
\$4750 - \$4799	6	28,582.12
\$4800 - \$4849	3	14,489.90
\$4850 - \$4899	6	29,230.42
\$4900 - \$4949	4	19,657.93
\$4950 - \$4999	7	34,833.33
\$5000 - \$4049	1	5,001.94
\$5050 - \$7499	94	568,437.38
\$7500 - \$9999	4	33,617.78
\$10000 - \$12500	3	31,179.84
OVER \$12500	1	20,980.05
TOTAL	150,585	38,314,191.89

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 95

Topic: Child Care Benefits

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Now if we take into account the \$1,000 tolerance:

- a) How many **debts** for CCB have been detected through the reconciliation process *after* the application of the \$1,000 waiver?
- b) What is the total \$ value of CCB **debts** which have been sought after the application of the \$1,000 waiver?
- c) What is the average value of the residual CCB **debts**?
- d) Could you provide (perhaps on notice) the distribution of these CCB **debts** – say in \$100 bands?

Answer:

- a) After the application of the waiver, 7,049 overpayments have been detected through the reconciliation process according to the latest verified figures.
- b) The latest available figures show that the total value of CCB overpayments is \$5,712,778.
- c) The average value of the residual debts is \$810.
- d) The distribution of these overpayments in \$50 bands is set out in the table below.

AMOUNT OF OVERPAYMENT	NUMBER	TOTAL AMOUNT
\$50 - \$99	579	43397.39
\$100 - \$149	483	60189.19
\$150 - \$199	451	78780.12
\$200 - \$249	369	82769.44
\$250 - \$299	380	104510.44
\$300 - \$349	359	116534.91
\$350 - \$399	305	114105.59
\$400 - \$449	272	116009.95
\$450 - \$499	283	134666.30
\$500 - \$549	222	115644.14
\$550 - \$599	238	136648.14
\$600 - \$649	218	135977.78
\$650 - \$699	196	132474.64
\$700 - \$749	153	110963.96
\$750 - \$799	168	130090.30
\$800 - \$849	142	117334.37
\$850 - \$899	137	120169.05
\$900 - \$949	126	116290.65
\$950 - \$999	123	119619.52

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\$1000 - \$1049	104	106713.77
\$1050 - \$1099	105	112654.13
\$1100 - \$1149	102	114694.24
\$1150 - \$1199	75	88035.14
\$1200 - \$1249	92	112735.97
\$1250 - \$1299	65	82850.55
\$1300 - \$1349	79	104800.20
\$1350 - \$1399	82	112695.02
\$1400 - \$1449	66	94088.80
\$1450 - \$1499	45	66248.20
\$1500 - \$1549	62	94559.48
\$1550 - \$1599	56	88205.29
\$1600 - \$1649	47	76401.94
\$1650 - \$1699	45	75462.51
\$1700 - \$1749	47	81168.46
\$1750 - \$1799	37	65783.77
\$1800 - \$1849	34	61816.54
\$1850 - \$1899	44	82592.70
\$1900 - \$1949	34	65479.52
\$1950 - \$1999	25	49632.43
\$2000 - \$2049	25	50670.82
\$2050 - \$2099	31	64218.54
\$2100 - \$2149	21	44596.04
\$2150 - \$2199	30	65327.52
\$2200 - \$2249	21	46561.88
\$2250 - \$2299	19	43249.02
\$2300 - \$2349	21	48710.78
\$2350 - \$2399	33	78335.01
\$2400 - \$2449	17	41322.85
\$2450 - \$2499	15	37156.39
\$2500 - \$2549	19	47991.85
\$2550 - \$2599	22	56658.69
\$2600 - \$2649	9	23631.52
\$2650 - \$2699	10	26765.24
\$2700 - \$2749	7	19010.68
\$2750 - \$2799	11	30567.99
\$2800 - \$2849	15	42390.80
\$2850 - \$2899	9	25816.22
\$2900 - \$2949	15	43860.93
\$2950 - \$2999	14	41589.56
\$3000 - \$3049	13	39391.14
\$3050 - \$3099	6	18401.23
\$3100 - \$3149	9	28080.91
\$3150 - \$3199	4	12732.10
\$3200 - \$3249	8	25837.54
\$3250 - \$3299	11	35949.30

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\$3300 - \$3349	8	26603.35
\$3350 - \$3399	3	10151.79
\$3400 - \$3449	5	17096.69
\$3450 - \$3499	7	24299.35
\$3500 - \$3549	11	38693.65
\$3550 - \$3599	4	14366.11
\$3600 - \$3649	7	25433.76
\$3650 - \$3699	5	18392.08
\$3700 - \$3749	5	18610.70
\$3750 - \$3799	6	22582.12
\$3800 - \$3849	3	11489.90
\$3850 - \$3899	6	23230.42
\$3900 - \$3949	4	15657.93
\$3950 - \$3999	7	27833.33
\$4000 - \$4049	1	4001.94
\$4050 - \$6499	94	474437.38
\$6500 - \$8999	4	29617.78
\$9000 - \$11500	3	28179.84
OVER \$11500	1	19980.05
TOTAL	7049	\$5712277.26

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Output Group: 1.1 Family Assistance

Question No: 96

Topic: Child Care Benefit

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Positive adjustments (Top-up payments)

- a) How many positive adjustments to CCB (**top-ups**) have been paid to date?
- b) What is the total value of the **top-up** payments to date?
- c) Could you provide (perhaps on notice) the distribution of these **top-ups**- say in \$100 bands?

Answer:

- a) 124,164 CCB top-ups have been paid according to the latest verified figures.
- b) The latest available figures show that \$20,424,123 has been paid in top-ups of CCB.
- c) The distribution of these top-ups in \$100 bands is set out in the table below.

TOP UPS	NUMBER	TOTAL AMOUNT
\$0 - \$99	78,662	2,471,190.04
\$100 - \$199	18,126	2,587,099.78
\$200 - \$299	8,872	2,174,403.87
\$300 - \$399	5,135	1,779,853.85
\$400 - \$499	3,334	1,491,704.05
\$500 - \$599	2,297	1,256,139.75
\$600 - \$699	1,592	1,027,343.52
\$700 - \$799	1,244	929,434.62
\$800 - \$899	933	789,969.19
\$900 - \$999	735	696,821.28
\$1000 - \$1099	550	574,558.97
\$1100 - \$1199	437	501,394.10
\$1200 - \$1299	383	479,071.19
\$1300 - \$1399	291	391,974.72
\$1400 - \$1499	240	347,553.76
\$1500 - \$1599	225	349,242.79
\$1600 - \$1699	152	249,887.85
\$1700 - \$1799	138	241,237.93
\$1800 - \$1899	127	234,889.66
\$1900 - \$1999	103	200,775.84
\$2000 - \$2099	72	147,997.99
\$2100 - \$2199	74	159,124.73
\$2200 - \$2299	49	109,982.91
\$2300 - \$2399	50	117,657.15
\$2400 - \$2499	36	88,105.54
\$2500 - \$2599	28	71,442.65
\$2600 - \$2699	37	97,886.03

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\$2700 - \$2799	29	79,888.81
\$2800 - \$2899	25	71,319.89
\$2900 - \$2999	23	67,542.77
\$3000 - \$3099	19	57,969.07
\$3100 - \$3199	15	47,116.95
\$3200 - \$3299	17	55,272.74
\$3300 - \$3399	13	43,636.05
\$3400 - \$3499	13	44,714.68
\$3500 - \$3599	14	49,592.90
\$3600 - \$3699	5	18,193.10
\$3700 - \$3799	6	22,462.44
\$3800 - \$3899	7	27,025.23
\$3900 - \$3999	5	19,771.82
\$4000 - \$4099	5	20,241.13
\$4100 - \$4199	2	8,229.13
\$4200 - \$4299	4	17,070.57
\$4300 - \$4399	2	8,690.18
\$4400 - \$4499	4	17,775.41
\$4500 - \$4599	6	27,161.55
\$4600 - \$4699	1	4,657.12
\$4700 - \$4799	1	4,765.89
\$4800 - \$4899	2	9,652.63
\$4900 - \$4999	4	19,734.96
\$5000 - \$7499	19	105,347.64
\$7500 - \$9999	1	9,547.20
TOTAL	124,164	20,424,123.62

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support..... Question No: 71 &74

Topic: Copy of the Youth Allowance evaluation.

Hansard Page: CA112 and CA 113

Senator Collins asked:

Can you provide a copy of the Youth Allowance evaluation?

Answer:

See attached.

The report may be accessed at:

<http://www.facs.gov.au/yae/contents.html>

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Students Support

Question No:72

Topic: Growth in Youth Allowance

Hansard Page: CA 113

Senator Collins asked:

Can you provide the data indicating the growth in Youth Allowance?

Answer:

The overall Youth Allowance population has increased by 1.7% since implementation in July 1998.

1998-99 Annual Report	84 210 (Job seekers) 303 693 (Students)	Total 387 903
1999-00 Annual Report	83 290 (Job seekers) 306 055 (Students)	Total 389 345
2000-01 Annual Report	84 452 (Job seekers) 308 663 (Students)	Total 393 205

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support

Question No: 73

Topic: Estimated numbers of customer on Youth Training Allowance if it still existed

Hansard Page: CA113

Senator Collins asked:

Can you provide the information on the estimated number of young people who would have been eligible for the Youth Training Allowance (YTA) in 2002 if this program still existed? You could go back to 1998 and look at what the growth forecasts were?

Answer:

Based on the actual number of customers in receipt of Youth Training Allowance (YTA) from 1995-1998, the average growth rate, and using the same eligibility criteria, the current population of YTA would be approximately 32 489.

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support

Question No: 68

Topic: Forward Estimates

Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked: Please provide details of Forward Estimates for all expenditure areas under the Output Group 1.2 (all that is provided in PBS is the 2002-03 financial year).

Answer:

Please find below Forward Estimate details for expenditure under Output Group 1.2 Youth and Student Support.

ADMINISTERED APPROPRIATIONS

Output Group 1.2 – Youth and Student Support	\$'000			
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Appropriation Bill (No. 1)				
Components of the Strategic Intervention Program	-	-	-	-
Green Corps	23,037	23,428	23,920	24,423
Job Placement, Employment and Training Program	18,471	18,859	19,256	19,660
Mentor Marketplace	802	1,372	2,250	-
Reconnect	19,244	19,244	19,244	19,244
Targeted Youth Assistance Program	2,000	-	-	-
Youth Activities Services	6,730	6,806	6,873	6,940
Subtotal	70,284	69,709	71,543	70,267
Appropriation Bill (No. 2)				
Transition to Independent Living Allowance	897	2,560	2,560	2,560
Subtotal	897	2,560	2,560	2,560
Special Appropriations				
Austudy Payment	271,919	282,424	291,229	300,167
Fares Allowance	1,095	1,095	1,095	1,095
Student Financial Supplement Scheme	159,119	159,119	159,119	159,119
Youth Allowance	2,289,089	2,327,926	2,363,403	2,378,480
Subtotal	2,721,222	2,770,564	2,814,846	2,838,861
Total Output Group 1.2	2,792,403	2,842,833	2,888,949	2,911,688

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¹DEPARTMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Output Group 1.2 – Youth and Student Support	\$'000			
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
<i>Policy Advice</i>	4,962	5,009	5,354	6,444
Purchasing, Funding & Relationship Management	4,608	4,651	4,972	5,984
Research and Evaluation	2,245	2,266	2,422	2,915
Service Delivery	-	-	-	-
Centrelink	226,799	228,494	231,028	252,522
Other	1,560	1,393	1,346	1,368
Total Output 1.2	240,174	241,812	245,122	269,234

¹ Departmental forward year estimates are based on a current notional split of allocations which may vary from year to year.

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support

Question No: 69

Topic: Youth Peak Groups / Advice

Hansard Page: CA 114

Senator Denman asked:

- A. Has the Department met formally with members of and representatives from the newly formed Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC)?
- B. Has this group requested funding by the Department?

Answer:

- A. Yes, on 16 May 2002.
- B. No.

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support

Question No: 70

Topic: Youth Suicide

Written question on notice

Senator Harradine asked:

Please describe any new or ongoing initiatives/budgetary commitments to tackle the problem of youth suicide. (Australia has one of the highest rates in the world, with 338 people aged 15-24 taking their own lives in 2000).

Answer:

There are no specific initiatives being undertaken within the Family and Community Services portfolio. Responsibility for youth suicide issues falls within the Health and Ageing portfolio, which conducts a number of initiatives aimed at reducing depression, mental illness and suicide among young Australians.

The Department of Family and Community Services delivers a range of programs that are aimed at preventative and early intervention measures to assist young people before they become suicidal; for example, the Reconnect and JPET programs assist more than 20,000 young Australians every year.

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Output Group: 1.2 Youth and Student Support

Question No: 75

Topic: National Youth Roundtable

Hansard Page: CA 114

Senator Collins asked:

Can you provide a breakdown of the total amount spent by the Commonwealth on the Youth Roundtable for 2001?

Answer:

The total amount spent by the Commonwealth on Youth Roundtable in 2000/2001 financial year was \$542,142.18. The financial year figure includes expenditure for several Roundtable events eg. the selection process for Roundtable 2002, printing and distribution of the Roundtable 2000 proceedings report.

However, the breakdown of Roundtable expenditure for the National Youth Roundtable 2001 event as requested is as follows:

Travel/Accommodation	\$ 172,229.38
Parliament House	\$ 53,734.25
Photography & filming	\$ 16,973.18
Contract payments	\$ 129,445.87
Planning, development and facilitation	\$ 69,187.43
TOTAL	\$ 441,570.11

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Senator Susan Knowles
Chair
Community Affairs Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Senator Knowles,

Correction To Record - Budget Estimates Hearing of 3 June 2002

I am writing to correct the record concerning answers I provided to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee during the Budget Estimates hearing of 3 June 2002.

During the hearing Senators Denman and Collins questioned whether approved outside school hours care services could offer additional places to those that had been allocated for Child Care Benefit purposes (Hansard reference CA 120). In my response I indicated that services could offer additional places but that those further places would not attract Child Care Benefit.

I have since been advised that this is not the case. Specifically, approved outside school hours care services are required by section 197 of the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* to operate within their approved number of places. An outside school hours care service that is allocated approved places does not have the option of also offering unapproved places, as to do so would put the service in breach of section 197.

I also wish to correct an answer that I provided to Senator Collins in response to a question about the cap on approved outside school hours care places. Senator Collins asked how a place within the cap was measured, "...per week or per day?" (Hansard reference CA 120).

The correct answer is that subsection 3(1)(c) of the Child Care Benefit (Allocation of Child Care Places) Determination 2000 defines a place as "the authority to provide at any given time, care for one child". When an outside school hours care service is allocated a certain number of places, this effectively sets an occupancy limit on the service, meaning that at any given time, an outside school hours care service cannot provide care for more children than its number of approved places. However, a given child occupies a place only when at the service, therefore that same place can, over a period of time, be used by more than one child.

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I apologise for the incorrect information provided to the Committee during the hearing.

Yours faithfully,

Dawn Casey
Assistant Secretary
Child Care Services

11 June 2002

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Output Group: 1.4 Childcare Support

Question No: 91

Topic: Child Care Branch Publications

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

What regular publications are put out by the Child Care Branch?

Who receives copies of these publications and how often?

Can we be put on the mailing list for any departmental publications?

Answer:

Child Care News provides important information for child care services. It has been published on a quarterly basis in the past, however ORIMA market research suggested that it would better suit the needs of services if the newsletter was published three times per year at regular intervals.

At present we are canvassing the readers of Child Care News with a view to producing an electronic version as a future option.

Present distribution:

- 2 copies of Child Care News are sent to each child care service and peak bodies (about 8,500 services in total)
- 250 copies are distributed through Centrelink
- 50 copies are sent to each FaCS state and territory office
- 100 copies are distributed through FaCS national office
- Ad hoc requests

Any individuals or organisations who wish to receive a copy of Child Care News may be added to our mailing list. (We have added the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee to the mailing list).

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care Support

Question No: 92

Topic: Output costs – Purchasing, funding & relationship management

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

In Additional Estimates in February 2002 we asked about the \$2.8m overspend in the 2000-2001 year for program management. The answer we received from Questions on Notice was incorrect, in stating that there was in fact an underspend in this area. The Budgeted amount was \$30.078m and the expenditure was \$32.916m. Please explain what this overspend was due to

Answer:

FaCS uses an output costing system to allocate appropriation revenues across all its outputs. The costing model allocates appropriation revenues across the output groups based on a survey of staff effort. The difference between the Budget amount and the actual amount for 2000-01 reflects higher appropriation revenues received during the year, compared to what was expected to be received at Budget.

The amount of staff effort against each FaCS core output (policy advice, program management and research and evaluation) has remained relatively stable but the higher actual appropriation revenue has resulted in all output costs increasing by about 9.5% for FaCS core outputs.

The difference between the Budget and actual amount reflects this costing methodology rather than an overspend against the program management output.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care Support

Question No: 97

Topic: Childcare Assistance Overpayments

Hansard Page: CA 119

Senator Jacinta Collins asked:

Could the Department provide a state-by-state breakdown of Childcare Assistance debts?

Answer:

CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE OVERPAYMENTS

State	Number of services with overpayments	Amount Outstanding
ACT	119	\$459,223.00
NSW	2298	\$13,550,915.00
QLD	1308	\$8,361,510.00
SA	504	\$1,420,544.00
WA	359	\$2,123,007.00
VIC	1481	\$7,969,137.00
TAS	72	\$653,015.00
NT	54	\$448,786.00
TOTAL	6195	\$34,986,137.00

- Notes:
1. Childcare Assistance finalisation is not yet complete.
 2. Some services, mainly in NSW and ACT, have not been notified of the above overpayment amounts yet.
 3. All services will be notified by 30 June 2002.

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Output Group: 1.4

Question No: 98

Topic: Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)

Hansard Page: CA 125

Senator Collins asked:

Have some centres gone down the path of providing non-assisted places?

Answer:

An approved OSHC service cannot provide care for more children at any given time than its approved number of places. Doing so would breach section 197 of *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999*.

Unapproved OSHC services may operate independently providing care for as many children as their State and Territory Regulations allows. These services operate outside the legislation and therefore have no access to Child Care Benefit.

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Output Group: 1.4

Question No: 83

Topic: Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- Can the Department confirm that even if an OSHC service has extra capacity it cannot take extra children?
- What about the requirement that all parents of OSHC register with CCB in order to take a place in an OSHC service?
- How many extra OSHC places were sought through Planning Advisory Committees in the past year (broken down by State/Territory)?
- What is the average amount of funding assistance per place in OSHC?

Answer:

- Yes. An approved OSHC service cannot provide care for more children at any given time than its approved number of places. Doing so would breach section 197 of *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999*.
- There is no such requirement. A child may use an allocated place in an OSHC service and the parents may choose not to make a claim for CCB.

• New South Wales	16145
Victoria	5175
Queensland	7274
South Australia	1800
Western Australia	832
Tasmania	260
Northern Territory	310
Australian Capital Territory	788

TOTAL 31984

- The following funding is available to OSHC services (excluding CCB):
 - a one-off set-up grant of \$36.55 per year round care place*; and
 - a one-off equipment grant of \$109.55 per year round care place*;and
 - establishment funding for new services during the first two years of operation at the rate of \$0.48 per hour, per approved place.

* A year round care place equates to 1150 hours per year of care

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Output Group: 1.4

Question No: 99

Topic: Family Day Care

Hansard Page: CA 126

Senator Collins asked:

Is there a demographic for the underutilised places? Is it urban, rural?

Answer:

To date, the majority of places that have been relinquished by schemes have come from Victoria and the ACT. The places that have been relinquished are a mix of urban and rural.

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Output Group: 1.4

Question No: 84

Topic: Family Day Care Places

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- Are there any further places to be allocated in the next 12 months? When is this likely to occur?
- How many requests, and what were the numbers of places requested, through Planning Advisory Committees for new FDC places (broken down by State/Territory)?
- Are there any plans to redistribute FDC places from areas where there is lower demand to areas where there are long waiting lists and unmet demand for places?
- What is the average amount of funding assistance per place in FDC?

Answer:

- There are no new places available for allocation. However, the Department is working with the National Family Day Care Council to manage the existing supply of places as effectively as possible. Schemes with places that are not being utilised are encouraged to release those places and the places are then reallocated to other schemes in accordance with identified priorities. The next reallocation of places is expected in July 2002.
- The PACs use a range of information in assessing demand for places. The June 2001 PAC round identified a need for 1834 new places.

New South Wales	885
Victoria	0
Queensland	639
South Australia	0
Western Australia	250
Tasmania	60
Northern Territory	0
Australian Capital Territory	0
TOTAL	1834

- Yes. Response provided in first answer above.

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- The following funding is available to FDC services (in addition to CCB):
 - a one-off establishment grant of \$58.90 per approved equivalent full-time place;
 - a one-off set-up grant of \$36.55 per approved equivalent full-time place;
 - a one-off equipment grant of \$131.40 per approved equivalent full-time place;
 - operational subsidy at the rate of \$19.30 per week per equivalent full-time place; and
 - part-time subsidy of \$5.50 per week for each child in care over the equivalent full-time place total.

In addition, FDC and OSHC services may be eligible for the following assistance;

- Regional Travel Assistance Grants (RTAG) – FDC only;
- Supplementary Services (SUPS);
- Special Needs Subsidy Scheme (SNSS);
- Disability Supplementary Services payments (D-SUPS) – FDC only;
- Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Program;
- Work for the Dole; and

Program support (training, resource and advisory agencies).

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care

Question No: 100

Topic: Grants for New Services

Hansard Page: C126

Senator Denman asked:

Can you provide in writing what is the range of grants (new services – incentive to private operators to set up in rural and remote areas) that is available and the amounts on offer? Can you give me the value of those grants as well?

Answer:

The Private Provider Incentives (PPI) measure was announced as part of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy in the 2000-2001 Budget. Commencing on 1 July 2001, \$7.5m has been allocated to the initiative over four years. So far, approximately \$4m has been committed under the initiative, for a total of 14 new child care centres.

Incentives are designed to encourage private providers to establish child care centres in rural/regional areas where there is a demand for below school aged care, but no centre based care exists to meet this need.

Approved private providers receive:

- an establishment subsidy for a period of two years (based on \$25.05 per week per place for all places for children 0 to 36 months, and \$16.80 per week per place for all places for children from 36 months to school age);
- a one off set up grant (\$36.55 per approved place) and a one off Equipment grant (\$610 per approved place); and
- optional block funded fee assistance for the first two years (based on the national average Child Care Benefit, and applied to all approved places in the centre).

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Output Group: 1.4

Question No: 101

Topic: Planning Advisory Committees (PACs)

Hansard Page: CA 127

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you provide copies of the minutes of the Child-care planning committee (PACs) meetings?

Answer:

No. Under the Terms of Reference for PACs all material and discussion at meetings is confidential.

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Output Group: 1.4

Question No: 102

Topic: Planning Advisory Committees (PACs)

Hansard Page: CA 128

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you provide us with the details of current sitting members for the seven PACs and guidelines that are available for their deliberations?

Answer:

Yes. See answer to Question No 85.

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Output Group: 1.4

Question No: 103

Topic: Planning Advisory Committees (PACs)

Hansard Page: CA 128

Senator Bishop asked:

Can you provide copies of their (PACs) recommendations for addressing demand in the child-care sector?

Answer:

No. Under the Terms of Reference for PACs all material and discussion at meetings is confidential.

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Output Group: 1.4

Question No: 85

Topic: Child Care Planning Advisory Committees (PACS)

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- Can we receive copies of the Minutes for all PAC meetings (nationally) for the past 12 months?
- Can we receive lists of the membership and current sitting members on each of these Committees?
- Can we receive copies of the planning data (by Local Government Area) provided to each PAC in the last 12 months that was used in their deliberations in demand for child care places/services?

Answer:

- No. Under the Terms of Reference for PACs all material and discussion at meetings is confidential. The Terms of Reference are attached.
- Membership guidelines are attached. The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services chair all PAC meetings.

New South Wales	NSW Family Day Care Association Office of Childcare, NSW Department of Community Services Association of Child Care Centres of NSW Community Child Care Co-operative Ltd Network of Community Activities NSW Local Government and Shires Association Quality Child Care Association of NSW
Victoria	Community Child Care Victorian Private Child Care Association Child Care Centres Association of Victoria Inc Family Day Care Victorian Resource Unit Victorian Association for Out of School Hours Services Inc Campaspe Shire Council
Queensland	Queensland Family Day Care Association Child Care Industry Association of Queensland Department of Families National Association of Community Based Children's Services Queensland Council of Parents & Citizens' Associations Inc Queensland Professional Child Care Centres Association Inc Local Council Representative
South Australia	Department of Education, Training & Employment

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	Local Government Association of SA SA Association of Child Care Centres National Association of Community Based Children's Services Outside School Hours Care Association South Australia Council of Social Services
Western Australia	Department of Community Development, Children's Services Child Care Association of WA Carewest Family Day Care Association Western Australia Outside School Services WA Municipal Association
Tasmania	Department of Education Outside School Hours Care Association Family Day Care Coordinators Association Local Government Association of Tasmania Child Care Association of Tasmania Tasmanian Association of Children's Services
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Health Department NT Outside School Hours Care Association NT Family Day Care Network Local Government Association of the NT Child Care Association of the NT Australian Early Childhood Association Northern Territory Education
Australian Capital Territory	ACT Office of Child Care ACT Children's Services Association ACT Family Day Care Association Association of Long Day Care Directors Out of School Hours Care Association of Act Regional Community Services

- No. Under the Terms of Reference for PACs all material and discussion at meetings is confidential. The Terms of Reference for PACs, Criteria for Assessment of Child Care, Data Sources for Planning are attached.

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May 2001

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEES

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

The National Planning System (NPS) is designed to ensure that child care places are allocated in areas where they are most needed. Planning Advisory Committees (PACs) have been established in each State and Territory to provide expert advice on the need for child care in different areas and to support Commonwealth Government monitoring processes. PACs' findings form the basis of Departmental determinations of areas where child care places of different types may be allocated. PACs also inform the Department's biannual analysis of unmet demand and over supply of child care and may contribute to research & development in the Child Care Program.

LEGISLATIVE BASIS

The new Family Assistance legislation, *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* provides generally for the approval of child care services. Section 206 of the legislation provides that the Minister may determine guidelines about the

- (a) procedures relating to the allocation of child care places to approved child care services;
- (b) matters to be taken into account in working out the number (if any) of child care places to be allocated to approved child care services;
- (c) the maximum number of places that can be allocated to approved child care services in a specified class; and
- (d) any other matters to be taken into account in making such an allocation.

In accordance with section 206, the Minister for Family and Community Services made the *Child Care Benefit (Allocation of Child Care Places) Determination 2000 on 26 June 2000*.

This determination details the responsibilities of the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services in allocating places to approved child care services.

Section 7 of the determination provides that, before allocating any places to approved child care services the Secretary must determine in writing:

Subsection 1

- a) the areas of Australia in which child care places may be allocated;
- b) the number of childcare places of each kind (approved family day care services, approved occasional care services and approved outside school hours services) which may be allocated in each of those areas.

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Subsection 7.2 provides that a determination under subsection 1 may also divide the number of child care places determined by the Secretary as available for allocation in a particular area into:

- a) numbers of places which may be allocated in respect of children in particular age groups; and
- b) for outside school hours care services, numbers of places which may be allocated in respect of before school care, after school care, and vacation care

Subsection 3 provides that, before making the determination under subsection 1, the Secretary shall take into account the following matters:

- a) the relative needs of different areas of Australia for the kinds of child care places to be allocated; and
- b) the relative child care needs of people in each area who have work, training or study commitments.

PAC MEMBERS

Planning Advisory Committees comprise members of the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, State and Local Governments and appointed experts in child care provision and planning, including members of peak child care groups and service providers.

PAC members are expected to add value to the planning process and as such should not depend only on the information and data provided by State and Territory Planners. PAC Members are encouraged to bring information from their own areas of expertise to the PAC meeting, including useful contacts, data and local knowledge of the industry.

THE ROLE OF PACs

The role of the PACs is to provide advice to assist the Secretary in making determinations under the *Child Care Benefit (Allocation of Child Care Places) Determination 2000* by providing expert independent advice on those areas of Australia that need child care places of various kinds. The role of the PACs is advisory. PACs have no decision-making or approval powers with regard to the actual allocation of new child care places.

To assist them to perform their role PACs will be advised by the Department about any relevant Government initiatives or policies.

PACs usually meet twice a year to consider child care need in the State/Territory for all types of child care.

PAC meetings are organised by State and Territory Office planning teams and chaired by the Department's State or Territory Manager. PACs report to the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services.

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OPERATING GUIDELINES

- ◆ PACs should have as their primary focus the **identification of areas where new services are required**. They should take particular account of the Government's recent child care initiative to provide incentives for private operators and employers to establish child care services in rural and regional areas. Accordingly PACs will be expected to make recommendations identifying rural and regional areas that have an established need for child care services.
- ◆ PACs are also required to take account of the Government's initiative to allow private operators to establish and manage Family Day Care Schemes and Outside School Hours Care services; and, in particular, to make recommendations on existing unfunded outside school hours care services that should be allocated Child Care Benefit places.
- ◆ PACs should also make recommendations on areas that already have an appropriate range of child care services, but which need additional places.
- ◆ Finally, PACs are required to consider and identify the areas of Australia in which centre based long day care is over supplied.

Family Choice

In making recommendations, PACs main objective should be to ensure that child care places are allocated where they are needed and that families requiring care for their children are able to access the kind of services they want. PACs should seek to make recommendations that meet the market demand rather than direct families into any particular form of care. Accordingly PACs would be expected to recommend that places be allocated to any area where an existing service type is operating at capacity and there is evidence of an unmet demand for additional places of that kind.

A secondary objective for PACs is to advise on the impact that any new places may have on existing services in the area.

PACs should note that the Secretary may at any time make a determination that an area needs additional child care places. The Secretary will usually make such determinations only in response to existing services that require additional places to meet immediate needs. Determinations to establish new services, on the other hand, will usually be informed by PAC recommendations.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Department recognises the sensitive nature of much of the child care data that may be compiled for consideration by PACs. All materials, in particular the draft initial assessments that PAC members have used during the meeting, are to be collected by the Department. All materials and discussion are confidential and are not intended for industry or public exposure.

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METHODOLOGY

PART A RANKING AREAS OF NEED

PACs are required to consider and assign a ranking to each Statistical Local Area (SLA) in their State or Territory.

Step 1

Separate rankings are required for below school age care (centre based care and family day care) and for school age care (outside school hours care). Ranking categories to be used are:

1. Child care places required - areas where there is a demonstrated need for child care, but where there is currently no existing or planned child care service. The number of places required should be specified.
2. Additional child care places required - areas in which there is an existing or planned supply of child care, but there remains a demonstrated need for additional child care places. This can also include places of a particular type eg baby care, extended hours care etc. The number of places required should be specified.
3. Sufficient supply.
4. Further research required.

For centre based long day care *only* a further ranking is required:

“PO” Potential for over supply (refer part B).

“O” Over supplied (refer part B).

In deciding these rankings, consideration should be given to the identification of gaps in the provision of different types of care within a service type. For example, within the supply of below school age care there may be gaps in the provision of baby care or extended hours care. PACs should also identify the needs of specific groups within an area, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Australian South Sea Islanders or children with a disability. PACs should

- (i) discuss broad child care policy issues in each area with the view to contribute to Departmental understanding of key issues and to contribute to planning and service development.
- (ii) assess in each area the long day care needs of below school age children where both parents or sole parent is working, looking for work, studying or training.
- (iii) assess in each area the before and after school care and vacation care needs of school age children where both parents or sole parent is working, looking for work, studying or training.

Step 2

For areas identified as Category 1 and 2 for below school age care, PACs should recommend, where relevant, the exact child care service type that will best meet the below school age care needs of parents including:

- centre based care;
- family day care ;
- flexible models of child care.

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Step 3

For each of the following child care service types (Category 1 and 2 areas only), recommend the number of additional places required to meet demand:

- (a) centre based long day care;
- (b) family day care;
- (c) flexible models of child care;
- (d) outside school hours care (before school and after school); and
- (e) vacation care.

Step 4

For areas identified Category 4 – Further Research Required, research strategies need to be canvassed and research priorities set (areas ranked in priority order). The findings from this research will usually be presented at the subsequent PAC meeting.

PART B IDENTIFYING AREAS OF OVER SUPPLY (FOR LONG DAY CARE CENTRES ONLY)

An over supplied area is one where there is a substantial excess in centre based long day care places at a level beyond that required to provide for fluctuation in the pattern of demand and to provide for a reasonable level of market competition. Because of the complexity of evaluating the number of children who may seek to use centre based child care in that local area, the decision to elect an area as either over supplied or potential for over supply is often subjective. As a guideline, *over supplied* should be reserved for areas where there is no doubt whatsoever that an area is over supplied. *Potential for over supply* should be used in other cases where the statistical analysis alone suggests that an area is over supplied.

The Department will prepare an initial estimate of over supplied areas as a basis for consideration. Each area identified by the Department as over supplied should be discussed individually. Particular attention needs to focus on contributing variables such as:

- informal care preferences
- vacancy rates
- waiting lists
- transport routes
- service gaps (0-2 year olds and/or special needs).

The Department's initial estimate of over supplied areas is based on a statistical assessment of the current supply and demand equation. PACs should note that part of this special assessment includes factoring in a “buffer” to mitigate some of the complexity of demand side issues. The demand buffer (increase total demand by 20% per SLA) has been calculated to account for volatility within the target population. The application of the buffer makes provision for factors such as seasonal variations in demand, the implications of improved affordability arising from CCB implementation, changes in informal care preferences, variations in labour force participation etc. PACs may choose to amend the demand buffer, but any such variation in method should be fully documented in reporting.

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PACs should confirm or deny the draft initial assessment of over supply for each area nominated. If confirmed as an area of over supply, the area should be given a ranking of “PO” (potential for over supply) or “O”(over supplied).

CORE CRITERIA
FOR ASSESSMENT OF CHILD CARE

These Core Criteria are intended to guide planners in the development of an integrated approach to child care planning by considering all child care types together. In developing a profile of child care need at an area level PACs should specifically consider the following:

Demand Variables

- 1 Number of children in a Statistical Local Area (SLA) below school age and school age (up to 12 years) who have both parents (or sole parent) employed, seeking employment, studying or training for employment;
- 2 Effects of labour force characteristics on child care needs (eg part-time, full-time work patterns, shiftwork, seasonal work, extended hours care);
- 3 Projected population growth and economic development;
- 4 Parents' preference for care eg. the use of informal care and the mix of service types within an area;
- 5 Adjustment to State/Territory level estimates of parent’s preference for informal care, where SLA level information is available;
- 6 Other services that impact on the provision of work related care to children aged 0 – 12 years of age;

Committees may also consider where appropriate:

- 7 Preferred location of care - near home, work or on journey to work routes;
- 8 Gaps in service provision within a child care type eg care for babies;
- 9 Special needs groups including communities in rural and remote regions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Australian South Sea Islanders, children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, adults and children with a disability; and
- 10 Any other factor relevant to demand for child care in a given area.

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Supply Variables

Any assessment of existing and planned child care supply at an area level should also incorporate the availability of child care in surrounding communities that are within reasonable travel distance. Overall the following supply factors must be considered:

Service types - below school age children

- 1 The existing and planned supply of places within Commonwealth and/or State funded:
 - (a) Long day care services
 - centre based, both community and private (non profit and profit)
 - Employer sponsored services
 - Family Day Care
 - (b) Occasional care
 - (c) Multi functional centres
 - (d) Flexible services for rural communities
 - (e) Pre-schools if appropriate

- 2 The existing and planned supply of child care services targeted to below school age children that are not funded by either the Commonwealth or State Government.

Service types - school age children

- 3 The existing and planned supply of places within Commonwealth and/or State funded;
 - (a) Outside School Hours Care
 - Before school
 - After school
 - (b) Vacation Care

- 4 Utilisation by school age children of services that are mainly targeted to children below school age (particularly Family Day Care);

Informal child care

- 5 Estimates of the supply of informal care for both below school age and school age children;

Other Variables

In addition to calculating at an area level the aggregate supply of child care places, Committees may also assess at an area level and comment where appropriate on the following:

- 6 Accessibility of location;

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- 7 Appropriateness of hours of operation compared with the needs of the local workforce;
- 8 Vacancy rates within existing services and any identifiable reasons for under-utilisation;
- 9 Assessed sustainability of a particular service type within a given area;
- 10 Any other operational issue relevant to the provision of child care in a given area.

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SUGGESTED DATA SOURCES FOR CHILD CARE PLANNING

DEMAND PROFILE

- 1 Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services needs based planning system that comprises data from the following sources:
 - Most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics Census and inter-censual information;
 - Australian Bureau of Statistics Population Projections (if available);
 - Special needs groups including communities in rural and remote regions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Australian South Sea Islanders, children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, adults and children with a disability;
 - Survey information.

- 2 Other Australian Bureau of Statistics data:
 - Child Care Survey (State level only)
 - Parent's preference for care near home and near work;
 - Parent's satisfaction with informal care
 - Census District level data on children;
 - Census and Intercensual data released in small States earlier;
 - Mapping/graphics such as Census data;
 - Dwelling commencements - available monthly

- 3 Commonwealth Government data:
 - Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs and the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business; including Natural Labour Market Areas;
 - Centrelink;
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission data (eg. ATSI population data rural and remote regions):

- 4 State Government data:
 - Department of Planning - Planning data;
 - Regional Development Boards;
 - Economic Departments - Industry and Planning;
 - Department of Education - Preschools and school enrolments;
 - Private school - enrolments;

- 5 Local Governments:
 - Consultations;
 - Need for formal care;
 - Parent preferences for service types, location, opening hours, amount of care, special needs etc.

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SUPPLY PROFILE

- 1 Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services:
 - Supply of operational and planned places for each service type by Statistical Local Area, regions and geographic code;
 - Location of services;
 - Hours of operation of services;
 - Regional profiles

- 2 Australian Bureau of Statistics data:
 - Child Care Survey data on informal care;

- 3 State Government:
 - Child Care licensing - State funded services;
 - Education - Pre-schools;

- 4 Local Government:
 - Child Care Development Applications;

- 5 Consultations:
 - Accessibility of services - location and hours;
 - Utilisation;
 - Level of informal care usage and satisfaction.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care Support

Question No: 86

Topic: Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Committee

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide a copy of all the consultation schedules that the CCCAC has undertaken in preparation of this report and who from the CCCAC attended each consultation.

Answer:

The Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council developed a broad consultation strategy to assist in the preparation of their report, *Child Care: Beyond 2001*. It was a stepped process designed to reach a broad range of participants. It commenced with focus group research across a range of areas including rural and remote areas. Prior to an interactive television broadcast involving Council members, an information brochure with a feedback form was distributed widely to capture areas of interest and promote participation in the event.

Other forms of consultation included three newsletters, a critical friend analysis process and 'roundtable' discussions with a range of stakeholders.

Council reported more than 1 000 hours of consultation.

Attendance by Council members in the consultation process is outlined in the following table.

Consultation	Date of event	Council members attending
Interactive Television Broadcast Brisbane	29 May 2000	Patrice Marriott (Chair) Judith Atkinson Carolyn Collins Jo Comans Professor Alan Hayes Robyn Monro Miller John Tainton
Roundtable Discussion Sydney	28 May 2001	Patrice Marriott (Chair) Jo Comans Professor Alan Hayes Robyn Monro Miller
Roundtable Discussion Melbourne	31 May 2001	Patrice Marriott (Chair) Judith Atkinson Christine Arnott Susan Pamplin
Roundtable Discussion Adelaide	5 June 2001	Judith Atkinson Robyn Monro Miller John Tainton

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Roundtable Discussion Brisbane	14 June 2001	Patrice Marriott(Chair) Robyn McKay Robyn Monro Miller John Tainton Susan Whitaker
Roundtable Discussion on status and standing issues Sydney	20 November 2000	Patrice Marriott (Chair) Judith Atkinson Christine Arnott Carolyn Collins Jo Comans Robyn Monro Miller Susan Whitaker
Roundtable Discussion on special needs issues Sydney	22 March 2001	Patrice Marriott (Chair) Judith Atkinson Carolyn Collins Jo Comans Robyn Monro Miller
Roundtable Discussion on disabilities issues Melbourne	7 May 2001	Robyn Monro Miller
Country Children's Services Association Conference Dubbo	24 June 2000	Patrice Marriott (Chair) Carolyn Collins
CCC Management Conference Sydney	26 October 2000	Patrice Marriott (Chair) Robyn Monro Miller
Children's Services Administrators Adelaide	13 July 2000	Patrice Marriott (Chair)
AECA Annual Council Meeting Canberra	14 July 2000	Patrice Marriott (Chair)
National Children's Services Forum Canberra	11 August 2000	Patrice Marriott (Chair)
Meeting with Chairs of 4 Councils Sydney	19 June 2001	Patrice Marriott (Chair)
Bendigo Children's Forum	10 September 2001	Robyn Monro Miller
Meeting with Chairs of 4 Councils Canberra	8 August 2001	Patrice Marriott (Chair) Robyn Monro Miller Professor Alan Hayes Christine Arnott
Queensland State Government Forum Brisbane	21 June 2001	Patrice Marriott (Chair)
National Association of Community Based Children's Services (NACBCS) Conference Wollongong	3 March 2001	Robyn Monro Miller
Community Child Care Meeting Sydney	22 May 2001	Professor Alan Hayes

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care Support

Question No: 76

Topic: Forward Estimates

Written question on notice

Senator Mark Bishop asked: Please provide details of Forward Estimates for all expenditure areas under the Output Group 1.4 (all that is provided in PBS is the 2002-03 financial year).

Answer:

Please find below Forward Estimates details for expenditure under Output Group 1.4 Child Care Support.

ADMINISTERED APPROPRIATIONS

Output Group 1.4 – Child Care Support	\$'000			
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Appropriation Bill (No. 1)				
Child Care Assistance	1,000	-	-	-
Child care for eligible parents undergoing training	14,037	14,934	15,288	15,652
Support for child care	180,815	184,823	188,068	191,373
Subtotal	195,852	199,757	203,356	207,025
Appropriation Bill (No. 2)				
Support for child care SPP	10,296	9,494	9,685	9,878
Subtotal	10,296	9,494	9,685	9,878
Special Appropriations				
Child Care Benefit	1,480,183	1,589,332	1,703,440	1,832,157
Child Care Rebate	-	-	-	-
Subtotal	1,480,183	1,589,332	1,703,440	1,832,157
Total Output Group 1.4	1,686,331	1,798,583	1,916,481	2,049,060

²DEPARTMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Output Group 1.4 – Child Care Support	\$'000			
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Policy Advice	3,575	3,588	4,951	6,107
Purchasing, Funding & Relationship Management	24,132	24,220	33,418	41,221
Research and Evaluation	2,086	2,093	2,888	3,562
Service Delivery	-	-	-	-
Centrelink	93,836	95,335	99,031	108,410
Other	8,302	8,453	8,597	8,779
Total Output 1.4	131,931	133,689	148,885	168,079

1. Departmental forward year estimates are based on a current notional split of allocations which may vary from year to year.

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Output Group: 1.4 Childcare Support

Question No: 77

Topic: Child Care Funding

Written question on notice

Senator BISHOP asked:

Please provide the following information:

- a) Total amount of funding on child care each year since 1990
- b) Number of funded places available each year since 1990
- c) Number of children assisted each year since 1990

Answer:

a) The following table shows the total amount of funding on child care each year since 1990:

Year	\$m
1990-91	\$255
1991-92	\$449
1992-93	\$555
1993-94	\$691
1994-95	\$894
1995-96	\$1,014
1996-97	\$1,092
1997-98	\$1,026
1998-99	\$1,091
1999-2000	\$1,278
2000-01	\$1,356

b) The following table shows the number of Commonwealth funded child care places for each year since 1990:

Year	Places
1991	168,400
1992	193,000
1993	208,000
1994	241,500
1995	268,900
1996	306,500
1997	331,200
1998	399,400
1999	422,100
2000	457,800
2001	500,034

c) The following table shows the number of children assisted by Commonwealth funded child care for each year since 1990 that data is available. In general, data is only available for

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early years in which a Child Care Census was undertaken. Additionally, Child Care Census data for the years between 1991 to 1999 is not comparable with Centrelink data for 2000 and 2001 as different counting rules apply.

Year (period) ¹	Children
1991	257,900
1992	298,860
1994/95	453,020
1996/97	542,400
1999	574,900
September 2000	641,739
September 2001	711,534

¹ Child Care Census data (1991-1999) obtained over a reference week. Double counting of children can occur. Centrelink data (2000-2001) obtained by counting individual children attending a service during that quarter.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child care Support

Question No: 81

Topic: Child Care Funding

Written question on notice

Senator BISHOP asked:

Please provide an update on a State/Territory basis of

- a) number of services opening/closing,
- b) places available in each type of child care and
- c) utilisation rates across the country.

Answer:

a) The following table shows the number of Commonwealth funded child care services that opened or closed from 1 July 1997 to 31 December 2001 by State/Territory.

Service Type		NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Australia
OSHC	Closures No.	123	79	72	52	71	11	13	8	429
	Openings No.	527	616	431	247	144	63	76	36	2140
Private LDC	Closures No.	111	138	43	12	46	8	5	5	368
	Openings No.	254	158	98	21	48	6	6	8	599
Community LDC	Closures No.	30	52	17	12	21	6	2	0	140
	Openings No.	33	24	17	12	9	8	4	4	111

LDC = Long day care, OSHC = Outside school hours care

b) The following table shows the number of child care places by State/Territory as at June 2001.

Service type		NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Australia
ASC	No.	26,653	28,681	25,110	10,286	6,640	1,972	1,837	3,473	104,652
BSC	No.	14,571	13,750	9,797	4,850	2,073	340	153	1,539	47,073
FDC	No.	22,371	16,727	12,547	5,323	4,772	3,247	904	4,949	70,840
LDC	No.	64,196	42,156	55,297	9,904	13,896	2,355	1,909	4,096	193,809
MAC ¹	No.	460	170	120	125	151	27	115	0	1,200
Multi ¹	No.	55	100	134	74	126	0	136	0	600
OCC	No.	1,186	722	516	83	376	79	10	102	3,074
VAC	No.	20,739	15,001	22,965	8,031	6,636	1,952	1,750	1,712	78,786
Total	No.	150,231	117,307	126,486	38,676	34,670	9,972	6,814	15,871	500,034

ASC = After school care, BSC = Before school care, FDC = Family day care.

LDC = Long day care, MAC = Multifunctional aboriginal children's service.

Multi = Multifunctional children's service, OCC = Occasional care, VAC = Vacation care.

(1) MAC and Multi figures are estimates from December 2000 - row totals for these service types are based on rounded estimates and may not equal the sum of the row.

c) The following table shows the utilisation rates of child care places by State/Territory.

Service type		NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Australia
LDC	%	89.9	84.7	84.7	76.2	85.5	77.1	88.9	92.7	86.6
ASC	%	63	57.8	58.6	54.1	77.3	46.3	70	60.7	60.1
BSC	%	52	47.5	47.6	50	66.1	26	33.6	36.3	49.6
FDC (1)	%									74.3

LDC = Long day care, ASC = After school care, BSC = Before school care, FDC = Family day care.

(1) FDC utilisation based on 35 hours of care, figures are not available by State/Territory.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care

Question No: 78

Topic: Private FDC and OSHC

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Senator Bishop asked:

Private FDC and OSHC services –

- How many of these have been approved since this program was opened to private providers?
- How many places do they provide?
- What are the plans for further expansion of this initiative?

Answer:

Private family day care:

Since the introduction of the initiative in January 2001, the Department of Family and Community Services has received a small number of applications, which are under consideration, however to date, there are no private family day care services approved.

Private outside school hours care services:

From 1 July 1999, private operators were eligible to take over existing community-based outside school hours care services. Since that time there are 257 services approved using 9039 places.

There is limited opportunity for this initiative to further expand at this time, although private family day care and outside school hours care services can take over sponsorship of existing services.

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Output Group: 1.4 Childcare Support

Question No: 79

Topic: Occasional Care Program

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

1. Where are these services located nationally
2. How does an OCC service qualify for “approved child care places”
3. How are they funded if they are not “approved”
4. How many people using OCC apply for CCB
5. How many of these are paid CCB and at what rates (max/min/partial)
6. What are the Dept plans for the further expansion/support of the Occasional Child Care sector given the increasing demand for these services and the extra flexibility they give part time workers?

Answer:

1. The following table shows the location of Child Care Benefit approved Occasional Child Care services.

State/Territory	Capital City	Other	Total
NSW	28	18	46
VIC	18	7	25
QLD	4	12	16
SA	3	0	3
WA	7	5	12
TAS	2	2	4
NT	0	1	1
ACT	4	0	4
AUSTRALIA	66	45	111

2. To qualify for “approved child care places”, a service must meet the requirements set out in the relevant legislation, in particular Part 8 of *A New Tax System (Family Assistance)(Administration) Act 1999*, and the related determinations, in particular the *Child Care Benefit (Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continued Approval) Determination 2000*.
3. There are four main funding models for occasional care, with some variation between the various states and territories.
 - **Formula funded** – These services, which are administered by the Commonwealth, receive an operational subsidy and are “approved” services for Child Care Benefit purposes.
 - **Non-formula funded** – These services are administered by the Commonwealth and are funded through grants that include operational subsidy and fee-relief components. They are “registered carers” for Child Care Benefit purposes. Registered carers are eligible to receive the minimum rate of CCB.

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- **Neighbourhood model** – These are state/territory administered services that are funded through a recurrent block grant which is paid to State Government. This grant includes operational subsidy and fee-relief components. In some cases, state/territory governments also provide funding. These services are registered carers for Child Care Benefit purposes.
 - **State/Territory funded only** – These services receive funding from state/territory governments. They may be registered carers and so receive minimum rates of CCB. Note: There may be services that are not registered carers and so receive no funding at all from the Commonwealth. The Department has no information about such services.
4. In December 2001 there were 10,452 Child Care Benefit eligible families who used approved Occasional Child Care. Of this number, 9,669 were receiving Child Care Benefit as a fee reduction. The remaining 783 families were potential lump sum claimants.
 5. Of the 9,669 families who were receiving Child Care Benefit as a fee reduction, 3,974 were receiving maximum rate, 4,681 were receiving partial rate, and 953 were receiving minimum rate (rate type is not available for 61 families).
 6. The Department is monitoring demand and usage in occasional care and will advise the Minister on possible policy responses.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care

Question No: 80

Topic: In-home Care

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

In-home Care:

- how many services and how many places currently operating
- please give a breakdown by State (this was provided as at October 2001)
- what is the overall expenditure on IHC
- what is the average cost per place

What are the Quality Assurance/accreditation requirements for in-home care.

Answer:

As at June 2002 there are 72 in-home care services operating with 1966 places.

The following table, as at June 2002, shows the number of in-home care services and places approved in each State or Territory:

State	Number of services	Number of places
NSW	5	380
QLD	27	625
VIC	18	316
SA	3	40
WA	11	280
TAS	3	220
NT	3	20
ACT	2	85
Total	72	1966

The measure commenced on 1 January 2001, the overall funding of \$49.9 million is available for 7,770 in-home care places over four years.

The average cost per place (excluding Child Care Benefit) is:

- one-off set-up grant - \$36.55;
- one-off equipment grant - \$131.40;
- one-off establishment grant - \$58.90;
- operational subsidy at the rate of \$19.30 per week per full-time place; and
- a part-time subsidy of \$5.50 per week for each child in care over the full-time place total.

At this stage there are no Quality Assurance/accreditation requirements for in-home care services.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care

Question No: 82

Topic: New Child Care Initiatives

Hansard Page: Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

Please provide an update on the implementation new Child Care initiatives (extra services, extra places, etc) from previous Budgets.

Answer:

This update relates to the Greater Flexibility and Choice for Child Care elements of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.

In-home care:

Currently there are 72 in-home care services (1,966 places) approved for operation. Some existing service operators have been approved for additional places following full utilisation of their original allocation, this denotes an increase in places rather than number of services.

More places will be available for allocation from 1 July 2002.

Private Provider Initiatives:

Currently there are six centres operating with 183 places, eight centres have been approved in principle with nine centres under development.

Private outside school hours care services:

From 1 July 1999 private-for-profit operators were eligible to take over existing community-based outside school hours care services. Since that time there are 257 services approved using 9039 places.

Private family day care services:

Since the introduction of the initiative in January 2001, the Department of Family and Community Services has received a small number of applications, but to date, there are no private family day care services approved.

Family Day Care Quality Assurance:

The Family Day Care Quality Assurance system was launched on 3 July 2001. Work is underway to develop the quality assurance system for outside school hours care.

Service type		NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Australia
LDC	%	89.9	84.7	84.7	76.2	85.5	77.1	88.9	92.7	86.6
ASC	%	63	57.8	58.6	54.1	77.3	46.3	70	60.7	60.1
BSC	%	52	47.5	47.6	50	66.1	26	33.6	36.3	49.6
FDC (1)	%									74.3

LDC = Long day care, ASC = After school care, BSC = Before school care, FDC = Family day care.

(1) FDC utilisation based on 35 hours of care, figures are not available by State/Territory.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care SupportQuestion No: 87

Topic: Data Collection

Written question on notice

Senator BISHOP asked:

- a) Please provide an update of the work of the development of a National Minimum Data Set for Children's Services – (this is due to be completed by the end of 2002).
- b) Has the Departmental survey of child care services planned for May 2002 been completed?
- c) Did this cover all service types and the full range of questions from previous surveys?
- d) Please provide an update of when this survey will be completed and information will be made available to us

Answer:

- a) The data manual for the first stage of the Children's Services National Minimum Data Set was finalised in October 2001 and will be pilot tested in August 2002. A final report on the outcomes of testing will be prepared by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare by December 2002. The Children's Services Data Working Group will continue to meet regularly for the remainder of the year to progress the pilot test and to work towards establishing the Data Set.
- b) The 2002 Commonwealth Census of Child Care Services was conducted for most services over the reference week 13 - 19 May. Vacation Care services will be surveyed over the period June to mid July.
- c) The 2002 Census covered child care services receiving Commonwealth funding including Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Occasional Care, Outside School Hours Care, Vacation Care, Aboriginal Playgroups and Enrichment Programs, Multifunctional Children's Services, Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services, Mobiles and Toy Libraries and, for the first time, In-home Care services. With some minor changes to reflect the introduction of Child Care Benefit, the full range of questions from previous Censuses has been included in this Census.
- d) Data from the Census is anticipated to be available by March 2003, with a publication to be released around June 2003.

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Output Group: 1.4

Question No: 88

Topic: Quality Assurance/Accreditation

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) Please provide an update on the submission of self-study reports by Long Day Care centres (400 due for submission in the period March to May 2002).
- b) Will all centres that have submitted a self-study report be visited by a validator? If not, what percentage of them will receive a visit.
- c) Can the Dept provide details of what resources are being provided to Family Day Care Schemes to help them implement the Quality Assurance Scheme in that sector?
- d) Please provide an update on implementation of the quality assurance scheme for Outside School Hours Care? What resources are being made available to these services to participate in the QA scheme?
- e) National Child Care Accreditation Council – please provide following details:
 - Copies of Annual Reports for the past three years (if Annual Reports not available, the alternative reports provided by the Council to Government)
 - What is the annual budget for the Council?
 - Please provide a breakdown on the expenditure items within this budget
 - Is the Budget managed by the Council, or by the Government (ie. Decisions on spending, future planning, etc)?
 - What are the Terms of Reference, reporting arrangements and decision making structure of the Council (i.e. does the Council report directly to the Minister’s office, how regularly, in written or verbal format, etc)
 - Are minutes of Council meetings available and from where?
 - What involvement does the Minister have in any accreditation decisions?
 - Is there any direct reporting or liaison with the Department centrally or through State offices?
 - Who are the current members of the Council, what are the appointment rules and processes?
- f) Are there ever any “spot visits” by Validators on behalf of NCAC?
 - Are there ever any unannounced visits by Validators on behalf of NCAC?
 - How much notice is usually given to a service before a visit is conducted?
 - Have any services lost their accreditation in the last 12 months? Where were they, and what did they do to lose their accreditation?
 - Where are staff for NCAC based?
- g) Where are qualified Validators based?

Answer:

(a) The National Childcare Accreditation Council has advised that 370 self-study reports have been received to date.

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(b) All long day care centres participating in the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System and family day schemes participating in the Family Day Quality Assurance system undergo a validation visit.

(c) Family Day Care schemes receive an operational subsidy to provide child care with quality outcomes for children. Family Day Care schemes that satisfactorily participate in the quality assurance system are eligible to receive Child Care Benefit.

The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC), who administer the quality assurance system for Family Day Care, provide each scheme with the following resources:

1. Quality Practices Guide – indicators of quality practice
2. Handbook – an overview of the quality assurance system
3. Workbook – to assist scheme members to work through the quality assurance process
4. Self-study Report – to assist schemes with self-evaluation and the setting of improvement goals
5. Video on FDCQA
6. On-line training through their website www.ncac.gov.au
7. Phone and email contact for queries

The Department has contracted Meerilinga Training College in Perth to provide training and resources such as a Central Hub Support Program, face-to-face training, Learning Guides, on-line training and bulletin board, Mentor support, and a hotline to assist schemes with FDCQA implementation issues.

Meerilinga has developed these resources in partnership with the NCAC to complement the NCAC resources.

(d) An Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) working party was set up in June 2001 to oversee the development of a quality assurance system for OSHC and has been extended recently to include private operator representatives. The working party now has representatives from National Out of School Hours Services Association (NOSHSA), Australian Federation of Child Care Associations (AFCCA) and Australian Confederation of Child Care (ACCC) as well as departmental representatives.

The OSHC Quality Assurance Working Party, in consultation with selected sector representatives, has developed a draft guide identifying quality practice indicators for Outside School Hours Care. The draft guide includes key concepts and example indicators of quality practice for OSHC. Once finalised the guide will be used to consult more broadly with the OSHC sector.

The model for quality assurance implementation will most likely resemble the model used for Family Day Care and Long Day Care where services are required to participate in quality assurance and undertake a cycle of continuing improvement.

It is anticipated that the quality assurance system for OSHC will be implemented in July 2003.

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As the implementation date gets closer, OSHC services will receive resources and support similar to what was provided for long day care and family day care services implementing quality systems. OSHC services that satisfactorily participate in the quality assurance system will be eligible for Child Care Benefit.

(e) Details of the National Child Care Accreditation Council areas follows:

- The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) does not currently produce an Annual Report. It does, however, report to the department on its performance against approved Key Performance Indicators. Statistics and other information are available to the public on the NCAC's website www.ncac.gov.au
- Funding of \$3,407,859 was approved for the NCAC for 2001/02
- Expenditure items in 2001/02 were:
 - Registration
 - Validator Training/Visits
 - Moderator Training/Moderating Services
 - NCAC Decisions
 - Complaints and Appeals
 - Community Awareness Program
 - Capital Expenditure
- The NCAC enters into a formal funding agreement with the department. The Budget is managed by the Council, with financial reports tabled at every Council meeting. The department monitors expenditure.
- The NCAC is an incorporated association under the New South Wales Association Act 1984. It operates in accordance with 'Approved Rules' (attachment A), changes to which must be approved in principle by the Minister before being voted on by Council members.

Major changes to policy which affect child care services participating in the quality assurance systems are approved by the Minister.

Other new policy initiatives and changes to existing policies are managed by the Council.

Council meets every six to eight weeks

The Chairperson and the Chief Executive Officer of the NCAC meet with the Minister at least once each year to discuss policy matters.

- Copies of minutes of Council meetings are not available to the public. The NCAC does, however, provide copies of Minutes to the department.

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- The NCAC is an independent body appointed to manage and administer child care quality assurance systems at arm's length from the government and the department. The Minister has no involvement in accreditation decisions.
- Staff within the Child Care Services Branch of the department act as a liaison point for the NCAC.
- Current members of Council are:
 - John Tainton (Chairperson)
 - Judith Atkinson (member)
 - Judy Kynaston (member)
 - Andrea Larkin (member)
 - Jenny Mobbs (member)
 - Dawn Casey (Commonwealth representative)

Appointments to Council are endorsed by the Prime Minister and/or Cabinet and approved by the Minister.

(f) 'Spot visits' by Validators do not occur in the Commonwealth-funded quality assurance systems.

- Are there ever any unannounced visits by Validators on behalf of NCAC?
No. All Validation visits occur at a date and time agreed by the child care service and the Validator
- How much notice is usually given to a service before a visit is conducted?
Validation visits occur within eight weeks of a service being notified that a validator has been allocated. The service and the validator agree on a mutually convenient date or dates for the visit.
- Have any services lost their accreditation in the last 12 months? Where were they, and what did they do to lose their accreditation?
In the 12 months from 1 June 2001 to 31 May 2002, 23 long day care centres lost their accreditation status following their validation visit. The centres did not reach the standard required for accreditation.
Nine centres are in New South Wales, three in the Northern Territory, six in Queensland and five in Victoria.
Four centres' accreditation 'lapsed' during the above period. Of those centres: one centre located in New South Wales accreditation lapsed while unresolved licensing and child protection issues were being investigated; one centre in Queensland failed to respond to correspondence regarding a complaint; and two centres in Queensland accreditation lapsed because they no longer have long day care places.
- Where are staff for NCAC based?
The NCAC operates from premises in Surry Hills, Sydney.

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(g) Validators are located in all States and Territories. They are either child care workers or people with recent child care service experience. All validators must successfully complete the validator training course run by the NCAC before they are able to work as validators.

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Output Group:1.4

Question No: 89

Topic: Special Needs Subsidy Scheme (SNSS)

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- when was the decision made to freeze SNSS and what was it based on?
- What is the new level of SNSS funding for the 2001-2002 financial year, and for the 2002-2003 financial year?
- What was the detail of any consultation with the sector on this decision?
- why were services given only 4 days notice? (letters sent on 11th April advising funding to be frozen on 15th April)
- what is the average number of applications per month that have been received for SNSS over the past 12 months?
- what other arrangements can families with children with special needs make if they are unable to access a child care service?
- how many children were assisted in the 12 months prior to 15 April and how much was spent on this initiative?
- what are the projections on both of these measures (i.e. number of children and costs) for the next 12 months?
- what is the nature of the “waiting list” that will be developed to handle the requests and how will this be managed (i.e. nationally or by State/Territory offices)? Who is responsible for this?
- How many children are currently on the waiting list? How often will reports be made available to parents/services about the size and waiting times applicable?
- Will services be penalised for turning away children with special needs if they determine that they cannot financially afford to support them without SNSS funding?
- How many special needs children have been refused services and where has this occurred (State/Territory)?
- who will be assessing whether services are “able to include the child through the use of existing resources and the support of SUPS” as indicated in the letter to services?

Answer:

(a) On 5 April 2002 it was decided to introduce a cap on SNSS expenditure. The decision was based on expenditure to date and estimates of expenditure to the end of the financial year.

(b) The estimated expenditure for 2001-02 is expected to exceed \$20million. Funding for 2002-03 will be driven by children with ongoing SNSS approvals plus any new approvals up to a limit of \$20million.

(c) The sector was not consulted.

(d) To achieve the necessary reduction in expenditure it was necessary to prevent a rush of applications in the few days prior to 15 April.

(e) 183.

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(f) Not all children with special needs require SNSS to access child care. The Commonwealth funded Supplementary Services Program (SUPS) helps mainstream child care services to improve access for children with additional needs. It provides training for child care workers, specialised resources and limited relief staffing. It may also provide funding for minor equipment. Other services available for children with special needs include state and territory funded services such as respite.

(g) Information pertaining to the 12 months period 15 April 2001 to 15 April 2002 is not available. From 1 July 2001 until 15 April 2002 approximately 4600 children were assisted at a projected cost of \$17.8million.

(h) For 2002-03 financial year it is expected that expenditure will be \$20million. The number of children will vary depending upon the hours required by each child.

(i) Eligible applications for SNSS are being placed on a waiting list in date order of receipt and will be approved in this order, by State and Territory offices, when funds become available.

(j) Nationally 123 children were on the waiting list at 15 May 2002. Child Care services and parents will be informed of the length of the waiting list when applying for SNSS and on request.

(k) No

(l) Up to 15 April 2002, no children with special needs who were eligible for SNSS support, as outlined in SNSS Guidelines, were refused assistance.

(m) A structured plan to determine whether a child can be included without SNSS support is developed by an inclusion support team, made up of the child care service 'co-ordinator', the family representative and a SUPS worker.

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Output Group: 1.4 Child Care

Question No: 90

Topic: Review of Special/Targeted Mobile Service Funding

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

- a) How many of these services are there? Where are they located? What is the total cost of this program?
- b) What has been the reason for the delay in this Review being released and responded to by the Minister?
- c) Please provide details of where the review is up to and plans for implementation of the recommendations.
- d) What does the Dept/Minister plan to do for services whose interim funding runs out at the end of June
- e) Have any services been advised they will be closed? Which ones?
- f) Are any services proposed? Where?

Answer:

- (a) 27 Special Services mobile services are funded nationally, 10 in NSW; 3 in VIC; 5 in QLD; 4 in WA; 2 in SA; 3 in NT. 2001-2002 expenditure was \$2.6m.
- (b) There has been no delay. The Department is currently finalising the review.
- (c) The Department is currently finalising the review.
- (d) Interim funding will be extended for three months pending finalisation of the review.
- (e) It is not intended that any special service mobile service will be closed.
- (f) At this time no new special service mobile services are proposed.

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Output Group: 2.1 Housing SupportQuestion No: 161

Topic: Rent Assistance Compliance Measure

Hansard Page: CA 88

Senator Bishop asked: When did the pilot program start, where it was done, what was sought to be achieved, what was the preliminary indications – these sorts of issues

Answer: A small pilot was undertaken in 1999 which indicated that internal data matching would be useful in identifying incorrect payment of Rent Assistance. The 2000-01 Budget provided funding to undertake 85,000 reviews of Rent Assistance using this form of data matching. The results have been very successful with those reviews identifying a total of \$9.85 million in savings during 2000-01. It is estimated that the savings for 2001-02 will be in excess of \$30 million. Because of the timely nature of this intervention, these savings derive mostly from proper adjustment to a person's future payment rather than allowing large debts to accrue.

The 2002-03 initiative provides funding to undertake a further 100,000 reviews per year. This is based on the success of the previous initiative as well as the results of random sample surveys which indicate that incorrect payment of rent assistance continues to be a problem.

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Output Group: 2.1 Housing Support

Question No: 104

Topic: Rent Assistance

Written question on notice

Senator Bishop asked:

What research or other work has the Department done to consider the effectiveness of Rent Assistance as a housing affordability measure?

Has there been any research or other consideration of the micro-economic effects of rent assistance in the rental housing market?

If so, what have been the findings of that research? Is it publicly available?

Did it look into price effects, price floors, profit taking and so on?

Did it consider alternative demand-side measures?

Did it consider whether there are supply-side measures that would be more effective?

If not, why not? Surely such research is fundamental to measuring the effectiveness of a demand-side measure like rent assistance?

Don't you need to look into price effects, price floors, profit-taking and so on?

Don't you need to consider alternative demand-side measures?

Don't you need to consider whether there are supply-side measures that would be more effective?

Answer:

The Department of Family and Community Services publishes information in its Annual Report about the impact of the Commonwealth Rent Assistance program. This includes measures of the effectiveness of the Rent Assistance program, including impact on housing affordability and the targeting of assistance. This is an ongoing monitoring and reporting process. Attachment A with historical rates has been included for your reference. More detailed information about the Rent Assistance program and the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement are included in the annual *Report on Government Services* (Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision).

AHURI (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute) is the Department's primary vehicle for housing research. It brokers independent research developed through close consultation with the key stakeholders, including State/Territory and Commonwealth governments. AHURI manages research projects that have policy relevance under a range of themes, including:

- housing assistance funding and financing; and
- the dynamics and drivers of housing supply and demand.

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Opinions in AHURI publications reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Commonwealth, AHURI, its board or its funding organisations.

Information published by AHURI is publicly available and can be downloaded at:

<http://www.ahuri.edu.au>

Examples of current research underway include:

'Demand subsidies for Private Renters: a Comparative Review' – this will include an evaluation of available evidence on the impact of housing demand subsidies on private rental markets, with respect to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America.

Risk Management and Efficient Housing Assistance Provision: A new methodology – aims to provide a tool for determining the most efficient mixes of housing assistance options.

In addition a final report on *'New approaches to expanding the supply of affordable housing in Australia: an increasing role for the private sector'* can be found on AHURI's website.

This report considers alternative forms of supply-side housing assistance.

Most AHURI research looking at demand based subsidies has overall been supportive of the role that Rent Assistance plays in affordable housing e.g. *Housing Assistance: The Lifetime Impacts* – by Anthony King (soon to be released) and *Rent Assistance and young people's decision-making* by Terry Burke, Sarah Pinkney and Scott Ewing.

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Attachment A

Effectiveness-Affordability

Impact of Rent Assistance on housing affordability.

Rent Assistance improves housing affordability for people receiving income support. Two affordability indicators are provided (Table 1). One compares the proportion of income units who would pay more than 30 per cent of income in rent before and after Rent Assistance is taken into account; and the other compares the proportion of income units who would pay more than 50 per cent of income in rent, before and after Rent Assistance is taken into account.

Table 1 Ratio of housing costs to income, before and after Rent Assistance

	If Rent Assistance not available		With Rent Assistance available	
Paying more than 30 per cent of income in rent	Dec 2000	69%	Dec 2000	33%
	June 2000	75%	June 2000	42%
	June 1999	76%	June 1999	42%
	June 1998	74%	June 1998	38%
Paying more than 50 per cent of income in rent	Dec 2000	28%	Dec 2000	9%
	June 2000	33%	June 2000	11%
	June 1999	33%	June 1999	12%
	June 1998	30%	June 1998	9%

Affordability for Rent Assistance recipients has improved substantially since June 2000 due to maximum rates increasing under The New Tax System. Since June 2000, average Rent Assistance has increased by 10 per cent while average rents for Rent Assistance recipients have increased by 5 per cent. Much of the increase in average rents was due to the inclusion of more families who had become eligible for Family Tax Benefit and, therefore Rent Assistance. Typically, families require larger, more expensive accommodation.

Effectiveness-Targeting

Proportion of persons/couples paying enough rent to receive maximum assistance

Proportion of income units paying enough rent to receive maximum Rent Assistance							
	June 96	June 97	June 98	June 99	June 00	Dec 00	June 01
All payments	57%	57%	61%	63%	63%	57%	57%

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Output Group: 2.1 Housing Support

Question No: 105

Topic: Funding under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement

Written question on notice

- **Senator Bishop** asked: This Budget confirmed that in the next three years, the Commonwealth would cut funding to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement by \$300 million in nominal terms and \$400 million in real terms. (*see table below*)
 - What has your analysis and forecasting shown that the effects of those cuts will be on public housing?
 - : How much housing stock will be sold as a result of the cuts?
 - : How many people will be added to public housing waiting lists as a result of the cuts?
 - : How much will maintenance of existing stock have to be reduced as a result of the cuts?
 - : What proposals for public housing redevelopment will be cancelled or deferred as a result of the cuts?
- If the Department has not done the analysis above, does this mean that you've taken \$300 million out of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement without knowing what the effects are going to be?
 - What effect will these cuts have on poverty in public housing – on substandard housing, on intergenerational welfare dependency, on public safety in estates? What has your analysis of this issue shown?
 - : If the Department does not have this detail on the impacts of the cuts on poverty, does that mean that while you've taken \$300 million out of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement no one has asked what the consequences will be for poverty?

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Table: Commonwealth Funding for the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement: 1995-6 to 2005-06

CSHA funding		
	\$ nominal	\$ real
		(1995/96 =100)
1995-96	1062	1062.0
1996-97	926	913.7
1997-98	825.4	814.4
1998-99	898.5	875.6
1999-2000	957.7	911.6
2000-01	1037.8	931.8
2001-02	1028.3	898.8
2002-03	1027.9	874.0
2003-04	929.9	771.4
2004-05	920.7	745.1
2005-06	910.7	719.1

Answer:

Funding arrangements for the final year (2002-03) of the current Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) were agreed in 1999. States and Territories have made appropriate budgetary commitments to enable them to deliver on agreed housing stock and assistance for the final year of the 1999 CSHA.

The forward estimates for the CSHA, given in the table above, reflect current policy as per the terms of the current CSHA. However, actual CSHA funding arrangements for the years 2003-04 and beyond will be determined following negotiations with the States and Territories. The Commonwealth is working with States and Territories on funding arrangements for the next CSHA to operate from 1 July 2003.

Negotiations on the next CSHA are exploring three major themes:

- Alternative funding arrangements, within the CSHA, including an analysis of the feasibility of recurrent funding;
- Methods for promoting private sector involvement in the development of low cost housing; and
- The extension of welfare reform to reduce workforce disincentives among public housing tenants.

Forward CSHA estimates reflect the continued application of the 1% efficiency dividend and the termination of GST compensation to the States and Territories for increases in housing costs. However, as indicated above, the actual level of funding will be dependent on the negotiations for the new CSHA.

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Commonwealth State Housing Agreement funded housing stock has grown by 4% since 1996 and there is also emphasis on maintenance and upgrading of ageing stock and reconfiguring stock to better meet client needs.

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Output Group: 2.1 Housing Support

Question No: 106

Topic: Work Incentives for public housing tenants

Hansard Page: CA 102

Senator Collins asked: Once people are working is there a move away from public housing?

Answer: The provision of public housing is a matter for states and territories. FaCS does not have any data on movement away from public housing as a result of gaining employment. Some States have introduced a review of tenants' entitlement to remain in public housing – based on changed circumstances including income – but this is a relatively new initiative.

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Output Group: 2.1 . Housing Support

Question No: 107

Topic: Public Housing

Hansard Page: CA 102

Senator Collins asked: Do you have any data on what proportion of people are long-term pensioners, as opposed to people whose life circumstances are likely to change? Do you have any data on throughput at the Commonwealth level?

Answer: The provision of public housing is a matter for States and Territories. The States and Territories do not provide data that would enable FaCS to determine the proportion of people in public housing who are long term pensioners. However, indications are that the overwhelming majority of public housing tenants would receive an income support payment or more than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit and would therefore be Centrelink customers.

For Centrelink customers in public housing as at June 2001, the majority are long-term pensioners. Approximately 29 per cent receive an Age Pension and 27 per cent a Disability Support Pension, 22 per cent get Parenting Payment Single and 12 per cent are on Newstart payments. Approximately 5 per cent are low income working families receiving either Parenting Payment Partnered or more than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit.

The latest Centrelink data shows that 60 per cent of Newstart recipients in public housing have been in receipt of income support payments, possibly with some short breaks, for more than two years.

FaCS does not routinely monitor turnover of social security recipients in public housing. However, a comparison of Centrelink records for June 2000 and June 2001 show that approximately 86 per cent of both single and partnered social security recipients who were in public housing in June 2000 were still in public housing and in receipt of income support 12 months later. Six per cent of the remaining had ceased to receive income support payments and it is not known whether they remained in public housing.

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Output Group: 2.2 Community Support

Question No: 108

Topic: Commonwealth offer of funding for concessions for Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders

Hansard Page: CA30

Senator Mark Bishop asked: Are you able to disclose the reasons why the ACT has rejected the offer?

Answer:

The ACT Government has rejected the Commonwealth's offer stating concerns over

- the recurrent impact on the ACT Budget of a cost sharing approach, given the ageing population in the ACT, and
- the targeting of the measure not being directed at low income earners or pensioners.

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Output Group: 2.2 Housing Support

Question No:109

Topic: Report into the costs of the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

Hansard Page: CA 30

Senator Bishop asked: There was a report contracted out by Health and Ageing that looked at the costs associated with the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card? Who was the consultant? Can you provide a copy of that report?

Answer: The Department of Health and Ageing, through the Healthy Ageing Task Force commissioned the consultants Booz Allen Hamilton to produce the report *National Reciprocal Transport Concessions for Seniors Card Holders*, Brisbane July 2001. Although the initiative to assist states and territories with funding to provide reciprocal transport concessions for State Seniors Card holders has been transferred to FaCS for implementation, the Department of Health and Ageing is responsible for the report and its distribution.