

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 21 NOVEMBER 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Centrelink Appeals and Reviews

Question reference number: HS 47

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Written

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Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) In 2012-13, how many appeals took longer than five weeks to complete?
- b) In 2012-13, how many appeals took less than five weeks to complete?
- c) At November 2013, how many internal appeals have been lodged, but have not been actioned?
- d) How many of these appeals are related to claims for the Disability Support Pension?
- e) How many staff worked on reviews/appeals at November 2013?
- f) What was the average waiting time for an appeal to be completed in 2012-13?
- g) How many, and what percentage of internal appeals in took longer than 5 weeks; over 3 months, over six months, over 12 months, to complete, in 2012-13?
- h) How many Centrelink case reviews are currently outstanding?
- i) At any point during this year was there 24,000 Centrelink cases waiting to be reviewed?
- j) Has Centrelink been trying to encourage individuals seeking review to withdraw their request by telling them that their review is unnecessary?
- k) Is the Government aware of the number of individuals giving up on their requested review due to "review fatigue"?
- l) What is the longest period of time an individual has had to wait for their review since the start of 2013?

Answer:

- a) In the 2012-13 financial year 54,150 (43.8 per cent) of Internal Reviews took longer than five weeks to complete.
- b) In the 2012-13 financial year 69,356 (56.2 per cent) of Internal Reviews took less than five weeks to complete

- c) As at the 29 November 2013, the total number of Internal Reviews awaiting finalisation by a Review Officer was 22,131.
- d) As at the 29 November 2013, the total number of Internal Reviews awaiting finalisation by a Review Officer and recorded as a rejection of Disability Support Pension claim was 7,622.
- e) During November 2013 the number of identified Review Officers (Authorised Review Officers) available full-time equivalent (FTE) was 233. The department is unable to quantify all staff who work on review/appeals. Some functions such as enquiries, quality checks and complaints related to review are undertaken by staff who are not separately identified as Review Officers.
- f) The average waiting time for an appeal to be completed in 2012-13 was 62 days.
- g) During the 2012-13 financial year the number and percentage of internal reviews which took longer than 5 weeks, over 3 months, over 6 months, over 12 months to complete is as follows:

2012-2013	5 weeks	3 months	6 months	12 months
Internal Reviews	54,150	34,033	12,249	869
Percentage	43.84%	27.56%	9.92%	0.70%

- h) Refer to answer (c)
- i) During the period 4 January 2013 to 28 June 2013, the number of Internal Reviews on hand was greater than 24,000.
- j) The department does not encourage individuals seeking a review to withdraw their request for a review.
- k) The department cannot answer this question.
- l) The longest period of time an individual has had to wait for their review since the start of 2013 is 343 days. This case was lodged on 2 January 2013. The review was completed on 11 December 2013, at which time the age of this case was 343 days old.