

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Payment Integrity) Bill 2017

31 August 2017

Outcome Number: Social Security

Question No: 1

Topic: Stopping the payment of the Pension Supplement overseas

Hansard page: 15

Senator Hume asked:

- a) Will age pensioners continue to receive their basic rate of pension overseas indefinitely?
- b) What does that basic amount of the pension supplement represent as a proportion of the person's full rate of pension?

Answer:

- a) Yes, Age Pension recipients will continue to receive their basic rate of pension overseas indefinitely.
- b) The basic amount of Pension Supplement for a single pensioner is currently \$23 per fortnight which is approximately 2.8 per cent of the full rate of pension a person receives after six weeks absence from Australia. For a member of a couple the basic amount of Pension Supplement is currently \$18.90 per person which is approximately 3 per cent of the full rate of pension a person receives after six weeks absence from Australia.

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31 August 2017

Outcome Number: Social Security

Question No: 2

Topic: Enhanced Residency Requirements for Pensioners

Hansard page(s): 19, 20

Senator Singh asked:

a) Does the department have any data that shows the average retirement age of culturally and linguistically diverse Australians?

Answer:

a) The Department does not have data that shows the average retirement age of culturally and linguistically diverse Australians.

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Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Payment Integrity) Bill 2017

31 August 2017

Outcome Number: Social Security

Question No: 3

Topic: Enhanced Residency Requirements for Pensioners

Hansard page(s): 19, 20

Senator Singh asked:

- a) Of the 2,300 pensioners each year delayed from receiving payment, how many do you estimate would receive special benefit instead?
- b) I understand that special benefit has a different taper and assets arrangement to a number of other payments, so I'm interested if you know how much on average these people might receive as special benefit.

Answer:

- a) Approximately 670 Age Pension and 300 Disability Support Pension recipients in 2019-2020.
- b) Special Benefit does not have a single rate of payment, recipients under 22 years are generally paid at the Youth Allowance rate and those 22 years and over are generally paid at the Newstart Allowance rate, before the reductions are taken into account. The average rate paid to all Special Benefit recipients in 2016-17 was \$524.94 per fortnight. This takes into account reductions due to direct deduction income test and in-kind support.

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Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Payment Integrity) Bill 2017

31 August 2017

Outcome Number: Social Security

Question No: 4

Topic: Pension recipients living overseas

Hansard page: 20-21

Senator Singh asked:

- a) Is the department able to provide data on the number of pension recipients who travel overseas each year?
- b) For how long?
- c) Could you provide that on notice, broken down by state and/or electorate?

Answer:

- a) The Department does not collect data on the total number of pension recipients who travel overseas each year.
- b) The Department does not collect data on the duration of overseas travel for all pension recipients.
- c) The Department does not collect data on Age Pension recipient's previous travel overseas by state or electorate.

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Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Payment Integrity) Bill 2017

31 August 2017

Outcome Number: Social Security

Question No: 5

Topic: Pension recipients living overseas

Hansard page: 20-21

Senator Singh asked:

Could the department update the committee on the number of people currently living overseas and receiving the Australian pension?

Answer:

The latest published figures in the *Income Support Customer: a statistical overview 2013* reported that at 30 June 2013 there were 76,865 persons paid the Australian Age Pension overseas for longer than six months.

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Inquiry into the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Payment Integrity) Bill 2017

31 August 2017

Outcome Number: 1

Question No: 6

Topic: Median income of families receiving payment by age of child

Hansard page: 23

Senator Singh asked: What is the median income of a family with children under five?

Ms Halbert: In the general population or in the income support population?

Senator SINGH: In the income support population.

Mr McBride: We would have to take that on notice.

Senator SINGH: Okay. Could you also take on notice the median income for a family with school-aged or teenaged children?

Mr McBride: Yes.

Answer:

The median income of families receiving Family Tax Benefit (Part A or Part B) with children under 5, age 5-12 and 13 and above is outlined in the following table.

Families on the median adjusted taxable income will not be impacted by the measure in Schedule 3 of the Social Security Amendment Bill (Payment Integrity) Bill 2017, as this measure only impacts families with an adjusted taxable income above \$94,316.

Age of youngest child	Median Adjusted Taxable Income in 2018-19		
	Not receiving Income Support	Receiving Income Support	All
Under 5 years	\$74,324.35	\$20,250.20	\$44,596.83
5-12 years	\$67,815.73	\$23,876.48	\$41,256.17
13+ years	\$59,506.51	\$23,864.76	\$40,821.30

Note: The analysis in the table is in 2018-19 terms, which means that the payment populations and incomes are projections, and not historical values.

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31 August 2017

Outcome Number: 1.10 Working Age Payments

Question No: 7

Topic: Liquid Assets Waiting Period

Hansard page: 24

Senator Kakoschke-Moore asked:

How often it's reported to Centrelink by somebody who is subject to a waiting period because of unpaid wages from an employer?

Answer:

The Department of Human Services (DHS) does not collect this information.

The Liquid Assets Waiting Period is determined using the amount of liquid assets a person has the date after they ceased work, based on the information provided on the date they submit their claim.

If the claimant has not been paid their entitlements from their employer at the time they submit their claim, DHS does not consider the unpaid entitlements when calculating the person's Liquid Assets Waiting Period.