

## **Senate Community Affairs References Committee**

### **DESIGN, SCOPE, COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS, CONTRACTS AWARDED AND IMPLEMENTATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE BETTER MANAGEMENT OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM INITIATIVE**

**PUBLIC HEARING 8 MARCH 2017**

**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Department of Human Services**

**Topic:** Recipient Engagement

**Question reference number:** QoN 25

**Member:** Kakoschke-Moore

**Type of question:** Hansard page 60

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 31 March 2017

**Number of pages:** 1

#### **Question:**

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Ms Campbell, you mentioned before that one of the issues the department had was that the department underestimated how many people would not clarify, once they received the initial letter, or would not engage with the system. What percentage of recipients did the department estimate would engage with the system, and how many participants have engaged with the system now?

Ms Campbell: I do not know that we have actually got that number at hand, but we could get that for you on notice.

#### **Answer:**

The Department estimated that approximately 65 per cent of individuals would go online and action the intervention by updating or confirming the information presented to them.

The Department is able to identify that in approximately 60 per cent of reviews that have been finalised, individuals accessed the online system. In accessing the system, individuals may have agreed with the information from the Australian Taxation Office and not provided any further updates to their employment details, they may have updated information, provided further information or just logged on to the system and not actively engaged. The Department is not able to disaggregate this population any further.

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**PUBLIC HEARING 8 MARCH 2017**

**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Department of Human Services**

**Topic:** Money spend on debt collection agencies

**Question reference number:** QoN 83

**Member:**

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 31 March 2017

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

How much money has been spent on the debt collection agencies?

**Answer:**

Online Compliance activity is a small part of the Department's overall debt activity and is not separately identified as part of External Collection Agent expenditure, but is estimated to be approximately \$395,000 (incl. GST) for the period of 1 July 2016 to 31 March 2017.

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**PUBLIC HEARING 8 MARCH 2017**

**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Department of Human Services**

**Topic:** Individuals receiving Debt Letters

**Question reference number:** QoN 87

**Member:**

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 31 March 2017

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

How many individuals flagged as Vulnerable have received either a Compliance Overpayment letter or a Debt Letter, or both?

**Answer:**

The Department works with vulnerable people as part of normal business operations. Vulnerable recipients are identified by the information the Department has on a recipient's record. Any recipient suffering hardships, or distress, can also seek assistance from the Department by calling the dedicated compliance phone number 1800 086 400.

Between July and December 2016, 21 people who had a known vulnerability identified on their Departmental record were sent a compliance letter. The process for these people is a staff assisted process, to provide extra help as required.

The Department offers to review debts and negotiate repayment arrangements for any person taking into account their individual circumstances.