Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

INQUIRY INTO CENTRELINK'S COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

PUBLIC HEARING 17 August 2020

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Services Australia

Topic: Tax Garnishees

Question reference number: IQ20-000121

Member: Rachel Siewert
Type of question: Hansard page: 8
Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 28 August 2020

Number of pages: 1

Question:

a) CHAIR: Yes. I've had an email, for example, from somebody sending me some information about their appeal being unsuccessful years ago—so we're going back a number of years, to 2016. He was told that his debt was a robodebt and that they used income averaging. But he had been told that he needed to go back to the AAT to get the decision overturned. Or is that a misunderstanding?

Ms Musolino: It just depends on the circumstances. I probably could come back with a bit more clarity on notice, but it will depend on the circumstances regarding whether that was a case where it was purely done on averaging or whether there was additional information available to the tribunal to make that decision. But I'll come back on notice with more information on that.

CHAIR: Yes, that would be appreciated. You might need to take this on notice two: could you tell me whether any debts based on income averaging which have been through the AAT, both 1 and/or 2 have been paid? Have any been refunded?

Ms Musolino: That have been refunded?

b) CHAIR: Yes. I want to know whether any of these debts that went through the AAT 1 and 2 process and that were based on income averaging have been refunded. If so, how many and to what value?

Ms Musolino: I'll come back to you on that.

Answer:

Services Australia (the Agency) is consulting with the AAT on AAT decisions (including current and finalised matters) where the calculation of the debt may have been based solely on Australian Taxation Office income averaging under the Income Compliance Program. The Agency is not able to provide information about the number of debts and any refunds made at this stage.