

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

INQUIRY INTO CENTRELINK'S COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Social Services Portfolio
Services Australia

Topic: Minimum Debt Amount

Question reference number: IQ22-000006

Member: Janet Rice

Type of question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 07 February 2022

Question:

Does Services Australia have a minimum debt amount when referring briefs to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP)?

- a. What is the minimum debt amount for referrals to the CDPP for each of the following financial years 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020?
- b. How is this threshold determined?

Answer:

Services Australia does not refer debts to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.

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INQUIRY INTO CENTRELINK'S COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Social Services Portfolio Services Australia

Topic: Debt Recovery - Legal Proceedings

Question reference number: IQ22-000007

Member: Janet Rice

Type of question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 07 February 2022

Question:

What have been the outcomes of Services Australia's legal proceedings for debt recovery?
Including:

- The total number of social services fraud briefs referred to the CDPP by Taskforce Integrity since July 2015, for each financial year.
- The average number of successful prosecutions of those cases referred to the CDPP by Services Australia since July 2015, for each financial year.

Answer:

Services Australia (the Agency) pursues legal proceedings in order to recover debts where other approaches have not been successful. The Agency recovers debts in order to protect the integrity of the system of social supports. Quantifying the outcomes of legal proceedings related to debt matters would be an unreasonable diversion of Agency resources, as it would require a manual assessment of past matters.

- The table below provides information on the number of matters that Taskforce Integrity has referred to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP) to consider criminal proceedings. These criminal matters are separate to any legal proceedings relating to debt recovery.

Year	Number of referrals
2021/22 FY to 31 Dec 2021	3
2020/21	Refer to the Services Australia 2020-21 Annual Report page 151
2019-20	Refer to QoN 3136
2018-19	Refer to QoN 3116
2017-18	Refer to QoN 3096
2016-17	Refer to QoN 3076
2015-16	Refer to QoN 3056

- Details of prosecution outcomes will need to be referred to the CDPP for response.

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

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ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Social Services Portfolio
Services Australia

Topic: Legal Proceedings Costs

Question reference number: IQ22-000008

Member: Janet Rice

Type of question: Written. Hansard Page/s: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 07 February 2022

Question:

What costs (total, average, maximum/minimum) have Services Australia incurred from their legal proceedings since July 2015?

Answer:

Services Australia's (the Agency) legal expenditure is reported annually to the Office of Legal Services Coordination in the Attorney-General's Department and published on the Agency's website.

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

INQUIRY INTO CENTRELINK'S COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Social Services Portfolio
Services Australia

Topic: Debts Referred to the CDPP

Question reference number: IQ22-000009

Member: Janet Rice

Type of question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 07 February 2022

Question:

The number of debts raised through or partially through the Robodebt referred to the CDPP for each of the following financial years 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020? Including:

- a. The number of these referred by Taskforce Integrity?
- b. The number of successful prosecutions for each of the above financial years
- c. Of these successful prosecutions cases related to Robodebt, what has been the outcome (penalty)?

Answer:

Services Australia, including Taskforce Integrity, does not refer debts to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.