

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 - Written Question 1 - Senator Siewert

Question reference number: SQ20-000453

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 12 June 2020

Question:

Please provide an update of the document detailing payment recipient numbers tabled by the Secretary of the Department of Social Services at a public hearing on 30 April 2020 with the following variations:

- a. Updated to the most recent week
- b. Disaggregation of recipient numbers by Indigenous status of recipients
- c. Removal of "claims on hand"
- d. Coverage of the following list of payments:
 - Newstart Allowance
 - JobSeeker Payment
 - Youth Allowance (Other)
 - Disability Support Pension
 - Parenting Payment Single
 - Age Pension
 - Youth Allowance (other)
 - Carer Payment
 - Parenting Payment Partnered
 - Youth Allowance (student and apprentice)
 - Austudy
 - Coronavirus Supplement

Answer:

The data requested has been provided in the attached spreadsheet.

QON - SQ20-000453: Recipients of Selected Income Support Payments - Weekly Time Series by Indigenous Status - 28/02/2020 to 22/05/2020.

Payment Type	28/02/2020			6/03/2020			13/03/2020			20/03/2020			27/03/2020			3/04/2020			10/04/2020			17/04/2020			24/04/2020			1/05/2020			8/05/2020			15/05/2020			22/05/2020			
	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total	Not identified Indigenous	Indigenous	Total				
Age Pension	2,496,625	21,837	2,518,462	2,496,858	21,861	2,518,719	2,497,640	21,879	2,519,519	2,499,463	21,915	2,521,378	2,501,275	21,950	2,523,225	2,503,209	22,006	2,525,215	2,505,320	22,050	2,527,370	2,506,549	22,110	2,528,659	2,508,626	22,155	2,530,781	2,511,611	22,214	2,533,825	2,515,458	22,267	2,537,725	2,518,638	22,320	2,540,958	2,522,361	22,406	2,544,767	
Austudy#	29,559	189	29,748	30,310	191	30,501	31,269	199	31,468	32,204	205	32,409	32,795	205	33,000	32,841	210	33,051	33,351	211	33,562	34,273	215	34,488	34,983	222	35,205	35,482	223	35,705	36,491	227	36,718	37,310	234	37,544	38,565	242	38,807	
Carer Payment	269,324	17,449	286,773	269,362	17,465	286,827	269,339	17,479	286,818	272,271	17,543	289,814	272,549	17,577	290,126	273,324	17,642	290,966	273,952	17,681	291,633	274,537	17,721	292,258	275,022	17,744	292,766	275,280	17,753	293,033	275,727	17,748	293,475	276,026	17,730	293,756	276,438	17,725	294,163	
Disability Support Pension	700,934	51,113	752,047	700,610	51,163	751,773	700,650	51,230	751,880	700,638	51,286	751,924	700,845	51,346	752,191	701,122	51,409	752,531	701,478	51,452	752,930	701,631	51,522	753,153	701,764	51,572	753,336	701,608	51,602	753,210	701,953	51,705	753,658	702,184	51,727	753,911	702,463	51,800	754,263	
JobSeeker Payment#	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Newstart Allowance	643,263	81,365	724,628	644,001	82,001	726,002	641,208	81,199	722,407	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Parenting Payment Partnered#	60,202	7,769	67,971	60,090	7,739	67,829	59,836	7,715	67,551	59,749	7,739	67,488	59,824	7,728	67,552	60,457	7,772	68,229	61,300	7,796	69,096	62,109	7,822	69,931	62,674	7,820	70,494	63,356	7,859	71,215	67,516	7,970	75,486	73,993	8,177	82,170	77,976	8,273	86,249	
Parenting Payment Single#	191,789	37,005	228,794	191,941	37,085	229,026	191,672	37,015	228,687	192,751	37,566	230,317	193,085	37,617	230,702	193,714	37,705	231,419	194,334	37,782	232,116	195,079	37,808	232,887	195,736	37,882	233,618	196,080	37,906	233,986	197,049	37,993	235,042	200,663	38,313	238,976	202,183	38,479	240,662	
Youth Allowance (other)#	66,796	18,940	85,736	66,644	19,112	85,756	65,927	18,957	84,884	70,553	21,071	91,624	72,081	21,318	93,399	76,655	21,824	98,479	84,399	22,604	107,003	90,241	23,213	113,454	97,671	23,946	121,617	107,051	24,855	131,906	116,855	25,785	142,640	136,675	27,668	164,343	140,039	28,056	168,095	
Youth Allowance (student and apprentice)#	155,254	1,891	157,145	159,714	1,938	161,652	161,834	1,979	163,813	164,776	2,003	166,779	166,971	2,026	168,997	171,565	2,066	173,631	176,300	2,093	178,393	179,574	2,104	181,678	182,166	2,135	184,301	185,334	2,141	187,475	192,297	2,235	194,532	198,943	2,329	201,272	205,135	2,427	207,562	
Combined Newstart Allowance*	648,474	81,662	730,136	649,812	82,301	732,113	646,382	81,508	727,890	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Combined JobSeeker Payment*#	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

Data Descriptions
 Includes the following recipients:
 Recipients of Austudy, Parenting Payment and Youth Allowance who are determined to be current (i.e. entitled to be paid) on the Centrelink payment system.
 Recipients of JobSeeker Payment and Newstart Allowance who are determined to be current (i.e. entitled to be paid) on the Centrelink payment system, and not in receipt of zero rate of payment.
 Recipients of Age Pension, Carer Payment, Disability Support Pension, Widow Pension, Wife Pension (Age) and Wife Pension (DSP) who are determined to be current (i.e. entitled to be paid) or suspended on the Centrelink payment system.
 Recipient counts for Age Pension and Carer Payment may not match published data due to different data extraction rules.
 # Receives Coronavirus Supplement (Note: Coronavirus Supplement commenced on 27 April 2020).
 *Recipients of Combined Newstart Allowance and Combined JobSeeker Payment include recipients of Bereavement Allowance and Sickness Allowance as these payments have been subsumed into JobSeeker Payment. This allows for a better comparison between the recipient numbers.
 Note: From 20 March 2020, JobSeeker Payment replaced Newstart Allowance as the main income support payment for recipients aged between 22 years to Age Pension qualification age who have capacity to work. Bereavement Allowance closed to new entrants and will cease when all current recipients have completed their bereavement period. Sickness Allowance closed to new entrants and will cease on 20 September 2020.
 Note: Indigenous recipients include only those who have voluntarily identified as Indigenous. These data may therefore represent an undercount.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 - Written Question 2 - Senator Siewert

Question reference number: SQ20-000454

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 12 June 2020

Question:

The Coronavirus Supplement is only being paid from April 27 to September 27, a period of 5 months. When the Coronavirus Supplement is phased out, will all recipients of eligible payments over the 5 month period receive the same amount?

Answer:

A payment recipient who qualifies to receive any amount of an eligible income support payment during a fortnight between 27 April 2020 and 24 September 2020 will receive \$550 of Coronavirus Supplement.

The total amount received will depend on how many fortnights the recipient receives an eligible payment.

Eligible income support payments include JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance, Sickness Allowance, ABSTUDY (Living Allowance), Austudy, Parenting Payment, Partner Allowance, Widow Allowance, Farm Household Allowance, and Special Benefit.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 - Written Question 3 - Senator Siewert

Question reference number: SQ20-000455

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 12 June 2020

Question:

The closure of gambling venues during the Covid-19 pandemic has assisted many people to significantly reduce or cease their gambling behaviour entirely. What support measures will the Government be providing to assist these people in ending their gambling addiction?

Answer:

Refer to the response to Question SQ20-000456.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 - Written Question 4 - Senator Siewert

Question reference number: SQ20-000456

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 12 June 2020

Question:

Is the Government using this opportunity to target support services towards people with existing gambling habits and people at-risk of developing addictive gambling behaviours?

Answer:

On 29 March 2020, the Australian Government announced a \$200 million Community Support Package (Package) commencing immediately over two years (from 2019-20 to 2020-21) to support vulnerable Australians impacted by coronavirus.

Under this package, \$20 million has been provided for financial counselling services and supports, with over \$1.8 million to 33 Problem Gambling Financial counselling services.

This is in addition to the funding the Government already provides for financial counsellors to help people, their families and friends affected by problem gambling. In 2018-19, 33 community organisations delivered support to 9,133 individual and group clients in every state and territory, with a particular focus on areas with high numbers of electronic gaming machines and socio-economic disadvantages.

Financial Counselling for Problem Gambling service providers can be found at the Department of Social Services Grants Service Directory at <https://serviceproviders.dss.gov.au/>.

Also, the National Debt Helpline provides a single contact point for people to access financial counselling, either immediately on the phone or via referral to face-to-face services. Services are voluntary, free and confidential. Further information is available at <https://ndh.org.au/> or by calling 1800 007 007.

Across Australia, counselling for gamblers and their families can be accessed by calling the National Gambling Helpline on 1800 858 858 or through Gambling Help Online at www.gamblinghelponline.org.au.

As part of the joint Commonwealth, state and territory National Consumer Protection Framework for online wagering (National Framework) in Australia 10 measures have been developed to reduce the harm that can be caused by online wagering to consumers. These measures provide people with easy-to-use tools and information to better control their gambling from a voluntary opt-out pre-commitment scheme and activity statements through to a national self-exclusion register (NSER), which will enable those experiencing gambling harm to immediately exclude themselves from services offered by all interactive wagering service providers.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 - Written Question 5 - Senator Siewert

Question reference number: SQ20-000457

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 12 June 2020

Question:

Noting that the re-opening of gambling venues may have a significant adverse effect on the mental wellbeing of people who may currently be experiencing an increase in stress, anxiety and depression as a result of the pandemic, has the Department considered implementing any specific measures to reduce the harm of gambling?

Answer:

Refer to the response to Question SQ20-000456.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 - Written Question 6 - Senator Siewert

Question reference number: SQ20-000458

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 12 June 2020

Question:

In order to mitigate the harm of gambling when venues re-open, has the Department considered introducing regulations that restrict the operating hours of gambling venues and limiting the time patrons can spend within a venue?

Answer:

This is a matter for state and territory governments as they have primary responsibility for the licensing of providers and premises in which gambling products are available.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 - Written Question 7 - Senator Siewert

Question reference number: SQ20-000459

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Type of Question: Written. Hansard Page/s:

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 12 June 2020

Question:

Has the Department considered what COVID-19 cleaning regimes will need to be implemented by venues to ensure electronic gaming machines are safe for users when they re-open and there is minimal risk for community transmission?

Answer:

The COVID-19 cleaning regimes of venues with electronic gaming machines is a matter for state and territory governments.