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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Youth Allowance (student and apprentice)</th>
<th>Parenting Payment Partnered</th>
<th>Parenting Payment Single Parent</th>
<th>Parenting Payment Sole Parent</th>
<th>Parenting Payment Other</th>
<th>Parenting Payment Partnered &amp; Other</th>
<th>Parenting Payment Born Before 1 July 2008</th>
<th>JobSeeker Payment</th>
<th>Newstart Allowance</th>
<th>Other Income Support Payments</th>
<th>Total Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03/04/2020</td>
<td>450,561</td>
<td>100,491</td>
<td>200,491</td>
<td>200,491</td>
<td>200,491</td>
<td>120,491</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>120,491</td>
<td>120,491</td>
<td>653,044</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/03/2020</td>
<td>1,524,283</td>
<td>418,283</td>
<td>418,283</td>
<td>418,283</td>
<td>418,283</td>
<td>418,283</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>418,283</td>
<td>418,283</td>
<td>2,227,566</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/05/2020</td>
<td>7,728</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>7,728</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Indigenous recipients include only those who have voluntarily identified as Indigenous. These data may therefore represent an undercount.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.