

Select Committee on COVID-19

INQUIRY INTO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Services Australia

Topic: Telephony Report - Month by Month

Question reference number: IQ20-000080

Member: Rachel Siewert

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12 May 2020

Number of pages: 7

Question:

In regards to QON IQ20-000035, please provide the telephony report broken down on a month by month basis for the past six months.

Answer:

The tables below provide the monthly telephony report details for the period December 2019 to 31 May 2020.

| Successful Calls | Dec-2019 | Jan-2020 | Feb-2020 | Mar-2020 | Apr-2020 | May-2020 | FYTD at 31 May 2020 |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Centrelink (Social Security and Welfare) | 2,714,057 | 3,135,613 | 2,736,230 | 5,769,873 | 7,804,960 | 4,604,589 | 41,896,890 |
| Disabilities, Sickness and Carers <i>Calls are associated with Disability Support Pension, Mobility Allowance and Sickness Allowance.</i> | 176,619 | 179,037 | 164,569 | 239,648 | 229,118 | 163,061 | 2,050,133 |
| Employment Services <i>Calls are associated with Newstart Allowance, JobSeeker Payment, Exceptional Circumstances Relief Help, Special Benefit and Employment Services Providers.</i> | 332,197 | 445,730 | 386,985 | 1,578,691 | 1,741,732 | 804,998 | 7,272,753 |
| Families and Parenting <i>Calls are associated with Child Care Benefit, Dad and Partner Pay, Double Orphan Pension, Family Tax Benefit, Parental Leave Pay and Parenting Payment.</i> | 376,077 | 466,201 | 426,901 | 559,091 | 525,288 | 365,551 | 5,309,068 |
| Older Australians <i>Calls are associated with Age Pension, Bereavement assistance, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Widow B Pension and Wife Pension.</i> | 104,227 | 123,372 | 120,820 | 149,162 | 169,625 | 146,284 | 1,419,496 |
| Youth and Students <i>Calls are associated with Austudy, Low Income Health Care Card, Pensioner Education, Supplement and Youth Allowance.</i> | 111,281 | 144,601 | 145,698 | 263,794 | 276,013 | 188,407 | 1,725,783 |
| Participation <i>Calls are associated with activity tested recipients who may not have met obligations. Primarily recipients are required to actively participate in approved activities. This line differs from the Employment Services line as its purpose is for compliance discussions with recipients.</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other | 1,613,656 | 1,776,672 | 1,491,257 | 2,979,487 | 4,863,184 | 2,936,288 | 24,119,657 |
| • Income Management <i>Calls are associated with Income Management enquiries.</i> | | | | | | | |
| • BasicsCard enquiry, BasicsCard balance enquiry <i>Calls are associated with BasicsCard enquiries.</i> | 332,161 | 338,822 | 301,186 | 468,149 | 445,591 | 307,565 | 2,980,120 |
| • Balance enquiry <i>Calls are associated with BasicsCard enquiries and BasicsCard balance enquiries.</i> | 128,836 | 132,742 | 121,644 | 193,303 | 275,694 | 155,917 | 1,182,736 |

NOTE:

- Successful calls are calls that have reached the Agency. Successful calls include calls that completed self-service in the Integrated Voice Response (IVR), abandoned calls and answered calls. Traditionally the number of successful calls reported for Social Security and Welfare were based on traditional Centrelink programmes such as Older Australians or Employment Services. The Participation queues were previously considered to be a compliance function and hence were excluded as were Debt Recovery and other business integrity lines.
- The 'Other' queue is made up of several telephone lines including: Australian Victim of Terrorism Overseas Payment, Income Management (including Basics Card), myGov, Emergency response, APIS (Australian Passport Information Service), International Services and Multilingual services.

| Answered Calls | Dec-2019 | Jan-2020 | Feb-2020 | Mar-2020 | Apr-2020 | May-2020 | FYTD as at 31 May 2020 |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Centrelink (Social Security and Welfare) | 1,191,640 | 1,348,404 | 1,289,830 | 1,422,744 | 1,932,624 | 1,779,329 | 15,641,342 |
| Disabilities, Sickness and Carers <i>Calls are associated with Disability Support Pension, Mobility Allowance and Sickness Allowance.</i> | 91,916 | 90,274 | 100,504 | 113,335 | 83,182 | 97,529 | 1,069,070 |
| Employment Services <i>Calls are associated with Newstart Allowance, JobSeeker Payment, Exceptional Circumstances Relief Help, Special Benefit and Employment Services Providers.</i> | 151,972 | 136,693 | 112,165 | 193,739 | 493,035 | 330,639 | 2,193,103 |
| Families and Parenting <i>Calls are associated with Child Care Benefit, Dad and Partner Pay, Double Orphan Pension, Family Tax Benefit, Parental Leave Pay and Parenting Payment.</i> | 232,905 | 273,311 | 268,718 | 259,325 | 186,293 | 283,688 | 3,117,085 |
| Older Australians <i>Calls are associated with Age Pension, Bereavement assistance, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Widow B Pension and Wife Pension.</i> | 53,549 | 61,140 | 62,621 | 75,204 | 58,084 | 64,062 | 680,880 |
| Youth and Students <i>Calls are associated with Austudy, Low Income Health Care Card, Pensioner Education, Supplement and Youth Allowance.</i> | 66,245 | 81,909 | 86,390 | 90,090 | 76,663 | 113,135 | 854,468 |
| Participation <i>Calls are associated with activity tested recipients who may not have met obligations. Primarily recipients are required to actively participate in approved activities. This line differs from the Employment Services line as its purpose is for compliance discussions with recipients.</i> | 23,228 | 11,650 | 25,128 | 20,552 | 5,770 | 3,259 | 227,860 |
| Other | 571,825 | 693,427 | 634,304 | 670,499 | 1,029,597 | 887,017 | 7,498,876 |
| • Income Management <i>Calls are associated with Income Management enquiries.</i> | 1,787 | 1,882 | 2,966 | 2,376 | 2,925 | 13,014 | 23,794 |
| • BasicsCard enquiry, BasicsCard balance enquiry <i>Calls are associated with BasicsCard enquiries.</i> | 177,047 | 159,114 | 142,852 | 131,749 | 134,749 | 161,595 | 1,436,479 |

NOTE:

- Answered calls are calls answered by a Service Officer
- The 'Other' queue is made up of several telephone lines including: Australian Victim of Terrorism Overseas Payment, Income Management (including Basics Card), myGov, Emergency response, APIS (Australian Passport Information Service), International Services and Multilingual services.

| Abandoned Calls | Dec-2019 | Jan-2020 | Feb-2020 | Mar-2020 | Apr-2020 | May-2020 | FYTD as at 31 May 2020 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Centrelink (Social Security and Welfare) | 226,298 | 312,734 | 293,302 | 845,836 | 676,367 | 187,373 | 4,012,898 |
| Disabilities, Sickness and Carers <i>Calls are associated with Disability Support Pension, Mobility Allowance and Sickness Allowance.</i> | 27,859 | 25,088 | 25,812 | 30,822 | 19,898 | 20,325 | 290,765 |
| Employment Services <i>Calls are associated with Newstart Allowance, JobSeeker Payment, Exceptional Circumstances Relief Help, Special Benefit and Employment Services Providers.</i> | 34,128 | 30,324 | 26,725 | 62,707 | 148,027 | 56,862 | 551,306 |
| Families and Parenting <i>Calls are associated with Child Care Benefit, Dad and Partner Pay, Double Orphan Pension, Family Tax Benefit, Parental Leave Pay and Parenting Payment.</i> | 59,037 | 69,273 | 73,127 | 67,483 | 39,096 | 16,365 | 746,176 |
| Older Australians <i>Calls are associated with Age Pension, Bereavement assistance, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Widow B Pension and Wife Pension.</i> | 16,093 | 21,376 | 20,341 | 20,064 | 15,640 | 18,263 | 219,547 |
| Youth and Students <i>Calls are associated with Austudy, Low Income Health Care Card, Pensioner Education, Supplement and Youth Allowance.</i> | 14,331 | 16,417 | 18,096 | 19,438 | 14,960 | 12,838 | 176,293 |
| Participation <i>Calls are associated with activity tested recipients who may not have met obligations. Primarily recipients are required to actively participate in approved activities. This line differs from the Employment Services line as its purpose is for compliance discussions with recipients.</i> | 5,156 | 3,273 | 6,692 | 5,867 | 2,017 | 1,039 | 68,983 |
| Other | 69,694 | 146,983 | 122,509 | 639,455 | 436,729 | 61,681 | 1,959,828 |
| • Income Management <i>Calls are associated with Income Management enquiries.</i> | 20 | 28 | 51 | 59 | 99 | 180 | 382 |
| • BasicsCard enquiry, BasicsCard balance enquiry <i>Calls are associated with BasicsCard enquiries.</i> | 24,388 | 42,606 | 34,592 | 136,399 | 88,196 | 13,210 | 350,499 |

NOTE:

- Abandoned calls are calls that have progressed through the IVR, entered a queue waiting to be answered and the call is ended, (hung up), before it is answered by a Service Officer
- The 'Other' queue is made up of several telephone lines including: Australian Victim of Terrorism Overseas Payment, Income Management (including Basics Card), myGov, Emergency response, APIS (Australian Passport Information Service), International Services and Multilingual services.

| Average Speed of Answer h:mm:ss | Dec-2019 | Jan-2020 | Feb-2020 | Mar-2020 | Apr-2020 | May-2020 | FYTD as at 31 May 2020 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Centrelink (Social Security and Welfare) | 0:13:23 | 0:14:42 | 0:14:36 | 0:24:04 | 0:18:51 | 0:07:41 | 0:15:28 |
| Disabilities, Sickness and Carers <i>Calls are associated with Disability Support Pension, Mobility Allowance and Sickness Allowance.</i> | 0:26:50 | 0:27:47 | 0:22:19 | 0:24:00 | 0:25:03 | 0:16:32 | 0:25:00 |
| Employment Services <i>Calls are associated with Newstart Allowance, JobSeeker Payment, Exceptional Circumstances Relief Help, Special Benefit and Employment Services Providers.</i> | 0:20:34 | 0:21:08 | 0:22:56 | 0:26:27 | 0:21:20 | 0:15:57 | 0:21:41 |
| Families and Parenting <i>Calls are associated with Child Care Benefit, Dad and Partner Pay, Double Orphan Pension, Family Tax Benefit, Parental Leave Pay and Parenting Payment.</i> | 0:21:53 | 0:23:28 | 0:24:06 | 0:25:16 | 0:24:39 | 0:05:23 | 0:21:40 |
| Older Australians <i>Calls are associated with Age Pension, Bereavement assistance, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Widow B Pension and Wife Pension.</i> | 0:21:02 | 0:25:28 | 0:21:43 | 0:17:36 | 0:23:35 | 0:23:44 | 0:23:01 |
| Youth and Students <i>Calls are associated with Austudy, Low Income Health Care Card, Pensioner Education, Supplement and Youth Allowance.</i> | 0:20:57 | 0:19:34 | 0:20:59 | 0:23:33 | 0:25:56 | 0:11:47 | 0:20:50 |
| Participation <i>Calls are associated with activity tested recipients who may not have met obligations. Primarily recipients are required to actively participate in approved activities. This line differs from the Employment Services line as its purpose is for compliance discussions with recipients.</i> | 0:12:27 | 0:11:13 | 0:15:43 | 0:15:29 | 0:13:34 | 0:09:22 | 0:18:37 |
| Other | 0:04:18 | 0:06:48 | 0:06:17 | 0:23:59 | 0:15:20 | 0:02:39 | 0:08:19 |
| • Income Management <i>Calls are associated with Income Management enquiries.</i> | 0:00:15 | 0:00:32 | 0:00:22 | 0:00:55 | 0:00:44 | 0:00:16 | 0:04:04 |
| • BasicsCard enquiry, BasicsCard balance enquiry <i>Calls are associated with BasicsCard enquiries.</i> | 0:03:04 | 0:06:40 | 0:06:09 | 0:19:36 | 0:19:29 | 0:01:10 | 0:06:06 |

NOTE:

- Average Speed of Answer is the average time it takes for a call waiting in the queue to be answered. The speed of answer is measured from when a call leaves the IVR menu (ie joins the queue to be answered) to when it is answered by a Service Officer.
- The 'Other' queue is made up of several telephone lines including: Australian Victim of Terrorism Overseas Payment, Income Management (including Basics Card), myGov, Emergency response, APIS (Australian Passport Information Service), International Services and Multilingual services.

| Busy Signals | Dec-2019 | Jan-2020 | Feb-2020 | Mar-2020 | Apr-2020 | May-2020 | FYTD as at 31 May 2020 |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Centrelink (Social Security and Welfare) | 1,077,337 | 2,785,662 | 1,549,259 | 6,337,707 | 6,286,262 | 1,116,011 | 26,701,624 |
| Disabilities, Sickness and Carers <i>Calls are associated with Disability Support Pension, Mobility Allowance and Sickness Allowance.</i> | 252,690 | 685,957 | 184,820 | 600,463 | 1,172,371 | 101,955 | 5,024,540 |
| Employment Services <i>Calls are associated with Newstart Allowance, JobSeeker Payment, Exceptional Circumstances Relief Help, Special Benefit and Employment Services Providers.</i> | - | - | - | 843,576 | 401,913 | 39,026 | 1,284,561 |
| Families and Parenting <i>Calls are associated with Child Care Benefit, Dad and Partner Pay, Double Orphan Pension, Family Tax Benefit, Parental Leave Pay and Parenting Payment.</i> | 432,740 | 1,020,924 | 657,256 | 2,434,394 | 1,920,883 | 258,338 | 9,609,546 |
| Older Australians <i>Calls are associated with Age Pension, Bereavement assistance, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Widow B Pension and Wife Pension.</i> | 92,748 | 299,248 | 105,529 | 288,341 | 1,037,624 | 359,583 | 2,963,468 |
| Youth and Students <i>Calls are associated with Austudy, Low Income Health Care Card, Pensioner Education, Supplement and Youth Allowance.</i> | 154,139 | 366,742 | 309,876 | 1,505,105 | 1,214,050 | 271,062 | 4,954,815 |
| Participation <i>Calls are associated with activity tested recipients who may not have met obligations. Primarily recipients are required to actively participate in approved activities. This line differs from the Employment Services line as its purpose is for compliance discussions with recipients.</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other | 145,020 | 412,791 | 291,778 | 665,828 | 539,421 | 86,047 | 2,864,694 |
| • Income Management <i>Calls are associated with Income Management enquiries.</i> | 1 | 137 | - | 22 | - | - | 188 |
| • BasicsCard enquiry, BasicsCard balance enquiry <i>Calls are associated with BasicsCard enquiries.</i> | - | 119 | 95 | 524 | 132 | 83 | 748 |

NOTE:

- Busy Signals are calls that receive a busy signal, (engaged tone), when they attempt to contact the Agency.
- The 'Other' queue is made up of several telephone lines including: Australian Victim of Terrorism Overseas Payment, Income Management (including Basics Card), myGov, Emergency response, APIS (Australian Passport Information Service), International Services and Multilingual services.

| Congested Messages | Dec-2019 | Jan-2020 | Feb-2020 | Mar-2020 | Apr-2020 | May-2020 | FYTD as at 31 May 2020 |
|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Centrelink (Social Security and Welfare) | 84,653 | 211,695 | 198,067 | 1,822,975 | 1,539,437 | 523,344 | 5,090,921 |
| Disabilities, Sickness and Carers <i>Calls are associated with Disability Support Pension, Mobility Allowance and Sickness Allowance.</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Employment Services <i>Calls are associated with Newstart Allowance, JobSeeker Payment, Exceptional Circumstances Relief Help, Special Benefit and Employment Services Providers.</i> | 84,653 | 211,695 | 198,067 | 1,822,975 | 1,539,437 | 504,848 | 5,072,425 |
| Families and Parenting <i>Calls are associated with Child Care Benefit, Dad and Partner Pay, Double Orphan Pension, Family Tax Benefit, Parental Leave Pay and Parenting Payment.</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Older Australians <i>Calls are associated with Age Pension, Bereavement assistance, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Widow B Pension and Wife Pension.</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 18,496 | 18,496 |
| Youth and Students <i>Calls are associated with Austudy, Low Income Health Care Card, Pensioner Education, Supplement and Youth Allowance.</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Participation <i>Calls are associated with activity tested recipients who may not have met obligations. Primarily recipients are required to actively participate in approved activities. This line differs from the Employment Services line as its purpose is for compliance discussions with recipients.</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| • Income Management <i>Calls are associated with Income Management enquiries.</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| • BasicsCard enquiry, BasicsCard balance enquiry <i>Calls are associated with BasicsCard enquiries.</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

NOTE:

- Congestion messages are activated in periods of high demand and provide an alternative service option for customers when their call cannot be answered.
- The 'Other' queue is made up of several telephone lines including: Australian Victim of Terrorism Overseas Payment, Income Management (including Basics Card), myGov, Emergency response, APIS (Australian Passport Information Service), International Services and Multilingual services.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

INQUIRY INTO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Services Australia

Topic: Vulnerability Indicator - Customer Records

Question reference number: IQ20-000081

Member: Rachel Siewert

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Please provide details about how Services Australia staff are alerted to the presence of a Vulnerability Indicator when they access a customer's record?

Answer:

There are different alert methods for staff, depending upon the way they access the customer record:

1. When a customer accesses a Service Centre, the service officer logging the enquiry is provided with basic customer information and alerts. One of these alerts is a 'VULN' button, indicating the presence of a Vulnerability Indicator(s). Clicking on the button will display details of the Vulnerability. This view is also displayed to the service officer who undertakes the enquiry.
2. When a customer accesses service via phone, the service officer taking the enquiry is provided with basic customer information and alerts. One of these alerts is the presence of a 'Display on Access' (DOA) document.

A DOA document is a file notation that displays whenever a staff member accesses a customer's record.

A DOA document is automatically recorded when an Employment Services Assessment or Job Capacity Assessment is completed. This document shows the outcome of the assessment, including whether any Vulnerability Indicators were recorded as a result of the assessment.

As over 90 per cent of Vulnerability Indicators are recorded as a result of one of these assessments, the staff member is immediately alerted to the presence of the indicator in most cases.

Having been alerted to the presence of a Vulnerability Indicator, the service officer can navigate to view the full details.

3. Staff who access a customer record independent of an enquiry e.g. file review, will be also presented with the DOA document. This will alert them to the presence of a Vulnerability Indicator.

Where a DOA document is not recorded against a customer, service officers are required to navigate to the relevant screen within the system to view the full details of all recorded Vulnerability Indicators.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

INQUIRY INTO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Services Australia

Topic: Vulnerability Indicator - Pop-up Screen

Question reference number: IQ20-000082

Member: Rachel Siewert

Type of question: Written.

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

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Are staff presented with a pop-up screen advising of a Vulnerability Indicator when they access a record?

Answer:

The staff view of the customer record is dependent upon the way the customer accesses a service.

In a Service Centre, service officers are provided with basic customer information and alerts. One of these alerts is a 'VULN' button, indicating the presence of a Vulnerability Indicator(s). Clicking on the button will display details of the Vulnerability.

In a Smart Centre, the service officer taking the enquiry is also provided with basic customer information and alerts. One of these alerts is the presence of a 'Display on Access' (DOA) document. Over 90 per cent of recorded Vulnerability Indicators have a DOA document.

Staff who access a customer record independent of an enquiry e.g. file review, will be presented with the DOA document. This will alert them to the presence of a Vulnerability Indicator.

Whether via a face-to-face services, or via phone, staff are immediately alerted to the existence of a Vulnerability Indicator in most cases. Where a DOA is not recorded for a customer, a service officer is required to navigate to the relevant screen in the system to view Vulnerability Indicators recorded.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

**INQUIRY INTO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S
RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Services Australia

Topic: Vulnerability Indicator - Pop-up screen setup

Question reference number: IQ20-000083

Member: Rachel Siewert

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 1

Question:

If yes to (3), are staff required to manually set-up a pop-up screen advising of a Vulnerability Indicator, or this set-up automatically when the Vulnerability Indicator is logged in the system for an individual?

Answer:

The existence of a Vulnerability Indicator is made available to staff automatically.