Department of Social Services

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

Inquiry into the Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment
(Technical Changes No. 2) Bill 2025

Public Hearing – 3 October 2025

Topic: Other debt data

Question reference number: IQ25-000023

Question asked by: Penny Allman-Payne

Type of Question: Written. **Hansard Page/s:** N/A

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 14 October 2025

Question:

How many individuals were impacted by income apportionment between 2003 and 2020?
What is the total value of the debt issued, including debts paid and debts outstanding, as a result of income apportionment between 2003 and 2020?
What is the total value of debt as a result of income apportionment still outstanding between 2003 and 2020?
What is the total value of debts affected by income apportionment still outstanding which are older than 6 years, and how many people are affected?

Answer:

As at October 2024, the Department of Social Services estimated up to around 1.7 million people with debts potentially impacted by income apportionment between 20 September 2003 to 6 December 2020. The total value of these debts is approximately $2.9 billion.

There is around $737 million in outstanding debt raised after 20 September 2003 affected by the pauses on debt recovery due to income apportionment. Many of these debts were in the process of being repaid prior to the recovery pauses.

Outstanding debts totalling around $636 million held by around 76,000 people are now more than six years old.

The above data is for debts identified as *potentially impacted* by income apportionment. It is not possible to know whether a debt is actually impacted by or a result of income apportionment without manual investigation of the debt by Services Australia. As stated elsewhere, many debts were calculated in favour of the debtor. In most cases, income apportionment affected debts only marginally.