

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

Public Hearing – 16 December 2019
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Community Affairs Committee inquiry into Centrelink's Compliance Program
- Question 1

Question reference number: SQ19-000525

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Type of Question: Spoken. Hansard Page/s: 32-33

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 24 January 2020

Question:

CHAIR: I know Senator O'Neill's got some further questions but, Mr Bennett, I must say I'm still confused about how the partial capacity to work process differs from the vulnerability indicators from DHS and the job capacity assessment process.

Mr Bennett: Effectively, the partial capacity to work, as we've discussed previously, deals with the person's capacity to work if it's less than 30 hours. That might be caused by a number of different factors, but it's done within that stream of working out the ability for the person to participate in activities whether or not they're above or below 30. And I'm not saying that some of these people won't be vulnerable, but it's almost like we've got two different lenses looking over them from two different frameworks. Certainly some of the partial capacity to work would be subject to vulnerability indicators. If it would be of assistance, I can take this on notice.

CHAIR: Yes, it would be. Could you take it on notice...

Answer:

A job seeker has a Partial Capacity to Work (PCW) if they have an ongoing physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment that prevents them from working at least 30 hours per week at or above the relevant minimum wage independently of a program of support within the next two years, as assessed through an Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) or a Job Capacity Assessment (JCA).

A Vulnerability Indicator is a flag that is added to a job seeker's record to assist employment services and Services Australia staff in identifying people with certain vulnerabilities, such as being a victim of domestic violence, homeless or at risk of homelessness, that potentially impacts the job seeker's capacity to comply with their mutual obligation requirements.

Vulnerability Indicators alert employment services and Services Australia staff that extra assistance may be required to support job seekers in meeting their mutual obligation requirements, and the need to exercise caution when considering job seeker compliance action.