

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Inquiry into Centrelink's Compliance Program

Public Hearing – 17 August 2020
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Inquiry into Centrelink's Compliance Program - Question 1 - Follow up to SQ20-000540

Question reference number: SQ20-000549

Senator: Deborah O'Neill

Type of Question: Spoken. Hansard Page/s: 17

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 28 August 2020

Question:

Senator O'NEILL: Before I go to Senator Watt, I will also complain about the late response to one of my questions on notice. I asked if Australians would have to keep their employment records for seven years to prove their innocence, because that became apparent in the course of these hearings. I did receive a response but not till 2.07 today. It still doesn't make it clear whether people have to keep records for seven years. If you could provide an answer to that question on notice, that would be great.

Answer:

Please refer to response to SQ20-000540 for information about the requirement to keep records.

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Inquiry into Centrelink's Compliance Program

Public Hearing – 31 July 2020
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Social Services

Topic: Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs inquiry into Centrelink's Compliance Program - Question 2

Question reference number: SQ20-000540

Senator: Deborah O'Neill

Type of Question: Spoken. Hansard Page/s: 29

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 14 August 2020

Question:

Senator O'NEILL: And if you could take on notice whether you will be requiring Australians to retain records of employment for seven years, to prove their innocence.

Ms Campbell: We will take on notice the requirement to retain records.

Answer:

The principles of administration in social security law include an obligation to establish procedures to ensure that abuses of the social security system are minimised. Compliance measures are undertaken to support people in receiving their correct payments.

Part 6.3.9 of the Social Security Guide relating to Confirming Employment Income states that “recipients may be required to obtain and provide Service Australia with further documentation to confirm or update any employment details.”

<https://guides.dss.gov.au/guide-social-security-law/6/3/9>

The Services Australia website advises recipients to “keep all relevant records such as:

- financial statements
- tax returns
- payslips or payment summary
- rental history
- bank statements
- any other documents that may help us and you.”

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/compliance-program>

People identified with possible income discrepancies under the Income Compliance Program were asked to provide relevant records to verify their income, such as payslips.