

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 1)
Bill 2014, Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures
No. 2) Bill 2014

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Passage of Legislation

Question reference number: 1

Senator: Moore

Type of question: Hansard pages 56-57

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator MOORE: In terms of getting to implement on 1 January, to have the legislation passed, what is the drop-dead date? And I believe that is the right term.

Mr Manderson: I might actually ask my colleagues from DHS if they could assist in that area.

Ms Lewin: We effectively try and build these things with what I think has been described previously in estimates as an 'on-off switch' so it is available ahead of time, rather than have a drop-dead date beyond which we could not do it. So for each of the measures we would look to be able to implement it by building the measure and being able to deploy it according to the date, if and when it becomes available.

Senator MOORE: Allowing for an implementation date of 1 January for an area that crosses through several computer systems, such as the Centrelink system and the employment system, it would seem that there would have to be some time, particularly in that time around Christmas which is also an extraordinarily heavy time for the various departments, particularly Centrelink.

Ms Lewin: It is true that it is complex when it crosses multiple systems, and I can take that on notice. I do not have a drop-dead date today; I am happy to take that on notice. But as I say, we will try and build it such that it can be deployed. Other than the systems aspect, though, it is certainly less complex: there are training, communication and change management functions which we are generally reasonably well geared-up to do.

Answer:

The Department of Human Services in conjunction with Department of Employment is developing the IT changes to support the 'Stronger Participation Incentives for Jobseekers under 30' measure.

The department uses an 'on/off' capability where decisions about the deployment of system changes can be made according to whether legislation has passed rather than committing to a drop dead date impacting on implementation.

The approach for this measure, and other measures impacted by related legislative processes, is to implement system changes on 6 December 2014 as part of a scheduled major release. These changes would remain in an 'off' state until royal assent is received.