

Question on notice no. 28

Portfolio question number: SQ19-000233

2019-20 Budget estimates

Education and Employment Committee, Jobs and Small Business Portfolio

Senator Rachel Siewert: asked the Department of Jobs and Small Business on 10 April 2019—

Senator SIEWERT: ... If you go up to jobactive there are still quite a large number there of people with disability who also have not re-engaged. There are 2,782 in the warning zone, 32 in the penalty zone and a number in the green zone. Why would the people be in the green zone and not re-engaged? Page 30 Ms Pitt: There are a number of reasons. Most usually the reason people who are in the green zone don't re-engage is usually because they find work. Senator SIEWERT: Usually: do we know that? Mr Emerson: That would be the primary reason but we could- Ms Pitt: The other reasons why they might not come back might be that they get a medical exemption or something else or might be suspended from the case load for some other reason.

Senator SIEWERT: This is specifically people who are cancelled off payment after not re-engaging. I understand the issue that, of course, people going through these programs will find work, but this is specifically where they've been cancelled off for not re-engaging. Could you perhaps take that on notice to give me an answer- Mr Smyth: We'll dig into that for you. Senator SIEWERT: a more specific answer to that one? Ms Pitt: Yes. Senator SIEWERT: In terms then of those that are in jobactive and the high numbers there, particularly, again homeless, 2,271. Have you looked into any of those figures, particularly for those specific cohorts? Ms Pitt: We're constantly looking at the figures, but in relation to evaluation, we're looking at doing a whole evaluation of TCF after the first 12 months. Some of these issues are the issues that we'll be looking specifically at. Senator SIEWERT: I appreciate you're doing an evaluation, but it worries me that there's a high number of people who are not re-engaging, particularly those who have disabilities or other vulnerabilities, who right now are not re-engaging. Do you track those to see if they have re-engaged after the 28 days? Mr Emerson: If they come back in, yes, we'd know that. But re-engagement, as Ms Pitt has said, would be one of the key elements of the evaluation. Senator SIEWERT: Unless you have it in your book, but I'm guessing that you don't, can you take on notice then, subsequently, how many of these who have not re-engaged, what the figures are now for those that have re-engaged? Ms Pitt: Those that have and those that have not re-engaged following going through the process? Mr Emerson: Yes, we can take that on notice. Senator SIEWERT: Across all of these payment types? Mr Emerson: Yes. Ms Pitt: Yes.

Answer —

Between 1 July 2018 and 31 December 2018, 50,717 *jobactive* job seekers failed to reengage within 28 days of their income support payment being suspended, and had their payment cancelled.

During the period 1 July 2018 – 31 December 2018 there were 655,294 overall *jobactive* commencements. The 50,717 *jobactive* job seekers who had their payment cancelled for failing to re-engage within 28 days represents 7.7 per cent of job seekers who commenced during the period.

The Table below shows the allowance type that the job seeker/participant was receiving and which Zone they were in when they first gained their suspension before failing to re-engage within 28 days.