

## **Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee**

### **ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES - 14 FEBRUARY 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

#### **Human Services Portfolio**

**Topic:** Family Payments – “Unregistered” children

**Question reference number:** HS 15

**Senator:** Smith

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 5 April 2013

**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

- a) Can the Department please advise whether payments such as the Baby Bonus, Family Tax Benefit Part A and Family Tax Benefit Part B are paid with respect to a child where the birth of that child has not been registered (or proof of application for registration has not been provided)?
- b) If yes, how many cases of "unregistered" children does the Family Assistance Office estimate is on its system?
- c) In cases of unregistered children, how does the Department process applications without proof of registration, i.e. what exemptions or "work-arounds" do officers utilise to successfully process payments?
- d) How does a client satisfy the Department that the child in question is indeed the child of the client?
- e) Has the Department identified any common reasons why clients may not be registering the birth of their child?

#### **Answer:**

- a) Under Family Assistance and Paid Parental Leave legislation, the Department makes Baby Bonus or Paid Parental Leave payments to those who declare they have either applied to register the child's birth or who have registered the child's birth. There is no birth registration requirement for Family Tax Benefit.
- b) It is not possible to determine how many children are on the Department's system whose birth is not registered as the Department does not collect this information.
- c) A customer is required to provide proof that the child was born or adopted. When customers have not registered the child's birth, they normally lodge with the Department a Newborn Child Claim for Paid Parental Leave, Family Assistance and Medicare form which they receive in hospital. This form includes proof of birth completed by the attending doctor or midwife. It also requires the customer to declare they have applied to register the child's birth. The Department then processes the claim.

- d) When claiming Family Assistance a customer must declare their relationship to the child and provide proof of the child's birth or adoption. To determine eligibility, the Department may also collect details about the child's parents and who has caring responsibility for the child. If evidence is provided that the parent is not the parent of the child in question, the Department will investigate to ensure the customer is eligible for the payment they have claimed.
- e) No. As the Department does not have information on customers or children whose birth is not registered, it cannot provide any advice about why they may not be registering the birth of their child.