

**COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE
 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 26 FEBRUARY 2015
 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

HS No.	Broad topic	Senator	Question
1	Australian Hearing – scoping study meeting costs	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: What was the cost to get you to Canberra? Did you travel on your own?</p> <p>Mr Davidson: Yes I did. I can get that information for you. [Page 7]</p>
2	Foreign Fighters – media strategies	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: Have any of these 70 people tried to explain to the media in recent times the strategic approach of how you prevent incorrect payments and how you have a forensic capability? Is that being done?</p> <p>Ms Campbell: I do not have the exact details of those arrangements, but we can take that on notice. [Page 13]</p>
3	Telephony Services – customer wait times	Siewert	<p>Senator SIEWERT: You have different lines for different allowances. What were the waiting times for different lines? Is that easy to get or are you able to give us something there?</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: One of my colleagues may well have that information. I do not have that information in my folder to break it down individually.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: I would like to know the average wait time per line.</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: For disability and carers, and that is the line that you were interested in—</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: That is the one that I have had a lot of complaints about recently, but I would like to know the average wait times for all of them.</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: We have monthly figures. What is your preference?</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: Would it be possible to table the monthly figures in terms of the most recent average?</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: We have figures here month by month for this financial year.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: It will take too long to read all of those out, so if you could table the progressive month by month figures.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: If you could take on notice each month for the last 12 months, but including the previous years so that I have last January through to this January. [Pages 16-17]</p>
4	Online services – timeliness of electronic letters and messages	Siewert	<p>Senator SIEWERT: Again, I have had a complaint, but this is a generic question. You have gone to sending a lot of the administration online. I have an example here—and I actually have a copy of the letter so it is not just hearsay—of someone who would have had to report next in December from March. She then thought that things must have changed and she must have been doing everything right. Some time later she then got a letter in her inbox saying that she should report on 27 January. She got that e-mail on 3 February. Obviously it changed what she was told, but she was also told that she should have reported in January.</p>

			<p>But she was told in February.</p> <p>Ms Campbell: We are happy to take personal circumstance—</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: I will give you this. My question is: how many of these examples do you have where this is happening?</p> <p>Ms Campbell: Sometimes there can be individual circumstances where something else may happen which triggers those types of activities. We generally look at these on a case-by-case basis. If we saw something systemic, then we would look to see whether we had an IT problem.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: You're right, there may have been something to trigger it, but to send a letter after the fact that you have to report in January. She could very well end up getting breached under the new regime because she had missed a reporting date when she did not even know she had one. And she had actually been told that she did not have to report until March.</p> <p>Ms Campbell: We are happy to take that individual case and look at it to see whether it is a systemic issue. Clearly it is hard to report on 27 January when you are told on 3 February. But if we can look at that and see whether there are any other cases. I do not think we have seen a systemic issue. [Pages 17-18]</p>
5	Communication Division Budget	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: I didn't think you would. What is the budget of your department, Mr Jongen?</p> <p>Mr Jongen: I am going to have to take that on notice. I am sorry. I do not have those figures available to me. Off the top of my head, to assist you, it is around \$9 million. [Page 23]</p>
6	Child Support matter - assessment	Xenophon	<p>Ms Campbell: The matter commenced with a child support assessment. I am not sure we would characterise it as the agency getting it wrong.</p> <p>Senator XENOPHON: Let us put it this way: I understand that an objections officer and the Social Security Appeals Tribunal both agreed that the original assessment was out, or wrong, by about 50 per cent. Can I clarify it? Having read the documents, the original assessment was \$12,000 but was later reduced to \$7,000.</p> <p>Mr Hutson: I am sorry; I do not have that level of detail in front of me.</p> <p>Senator XENOPHON: I do. You may want to take it on notice if you think that is wrong.</p> <p>Mr Hutson: Sure. [Page 25]</p>
7	Child Support matter – consideration of documents	Xenophon	<p>Senator XENOPHON: Let us talk about the issue of model litigant. I note that when the agency fronted the Family Court two weeks ago it had a barrister, two AGS lawyers and a departmental lawyer to oppose an untrained, self-representing father asking that his matter be re-opened to lay out documents that he says—and that I say—were erroneously withheld from him and he wanted the judge to consider. It concerns me that there is now an argument about not allowing documents. You are supposed to be a model litigant and you are saying you are fighting—you are spending tens of thousands of dollars with each court hearing—about not allowing documents to be reconsidered in respect of this matter, attempting to refuse that these documents be considered.</p> <p>Ms Campbell: To do that I would need to call the legal practitioners so that we could go</p>

			<p>through that level of detail. As you can imagine, we do provide the actual operation of these legal cases to the lawyers to construct those. I do not have the information about that exact point with me.</p> <p>Senator XENOPHON: Again, I ask that you take this on notice. A fortune is now being spent, with up to four lawyers turning up against an unrepresented father about documents that he says—and I say—were erroneously withheld from him. [Page 26]</p>
8	Child Support matter – written advice and estimate	Xenophon	<p>Senator XENOPHON: I note that the legal services directions require you to get a written advice before commencing proceedings. Did that occur in this instance?</p> <p>Mr Hutson: That certainly occurs.</p> <p>Senator XENOPHON: You also need to get an estimate under the various professional rules as to what the likely cost of this action would be?</p> <p>Mr Hutson: Yes.</p> <p>Senator XENOPHON: Can you tell us what the estimate was?</p> <p>Mr Hutson: No, I would have to take that one on notice.</p> <p>Senator XENOPHON: Yes, but you will tell me that, won't you? Or the likely costs—</p> <p>Mr Hutson: If I am able to tell you that. I will take the question on notice and I will—</p> <p>Senator XENOPHON: No, no. What I do not understand is that you have refused previously to let me know what the costs of this are, notwithstanding that Senator David Johnston, when he was in opposition, was asking similar questions and you provided information to him as to what the costs were a couple of years ago. Back then it was \$25,000. It has now gone up to \$565,000. I want to know why you have refused, in answers on notice, to provide me with details of cost. It does not relate to the identity of the parties. I just want to know what the costs are.</p> <p>Mr Hutson: I will take that question on notice then. [Page 27]</p>
9	Child Support matter – standard contract terms	Xenophon	<p>Senator XENOPHON: It is my intention to put a standing question on notice, as this matter continues, about the costs. Your standard contract terms about refusing to answer questions of costs suggest it is not a problem to reveal monetary aspects of contracts to the Senate. I refer you to clause 15, in particular, and clauses 14.3 under 'confidentiality' and 14.3(d) that 'without limiting the application of this clause, 14.3, is disclosed in order to respond to a question or a direction of a House or a request by a committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia or such equivalent bodies of the parliament of the relevant state'. Do you agree that in this process, if you are asked questions about how much a particular matters costs, you ought to disclose that?</p> <p>Mr Hutson: As I said, I will take that question on notice.</p> <p>Ms Campbell: We will abide by those directions of the Senate.</p> <p>Senator XENOPHON: You have not previously.</p> <p>Ms Campbell: I will go back and review that as to where that has occurred.</p> <p>Senator XENOPHON: These were previous answers on notice provided.</p> <p>Ms Campbell: I will review those questions. [Page 27]</p>

10	Four Corners report – Job Services Australia	Siewert	<p>Senator SIEWERT: Thank you. Have you contacted the people that were featured in the show to try to get some further information about the allegations that were made?</p> <p>Ms Golightly: I would have to take that on notice. No. [Page 30]</p>
11	Centrelink overpayments	Siewert	<p>a) ACTING CHAIR (Senator Siewert):You answered a question for me, question 158 on overpayment figures. The average overpayment was 0.13 per cent—the Chair is back now—then you gave the figures of the average overpayment. In terms of the overpayments, could you take on notice for me, please, what the causes of those overpayments were? If you could tell me in general and then take on notice what the causes of those overpayments were. Were they misreporting, not reporting on time or were they the department's errors? Is that possible?</p> <p>Ms Campbell: We will do the best we can. I am not sure what level of specificity we have got on that. We will seek to get as much information as we can.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: You have given me some quite detailed information on breaking it down. I thank you for that because it is really useful. You look at some that are really high. For example, for parenting payment single it is nearly 30 per cent. I am wondering if you could also take on notice that question. [Page 30]</p> <p>b) Ms Campbell: We are constantly looking at why people get overpayments, whether it is not doing the appropriate reporting or not understanding the parameters around which the payments are made. One of the roles of Mr Jongen is to make sure that people understand their reporting requirements and their obligations under them. When we find an area where we are seeing a spike in people getting it wrong, we do that strategy about ensuring that people are aware of their commitments.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: Have you done that in these cases, because it is really high for Austudy, parenting payment partnered, parenting payment single, Newstart, family tax benefit—in fact, there are a whole lot of areas that are really high. Have you done that, and have you seen a decrease in it in the six months since the end of June 2014?</p> <p>Ms Golightly: We will take the detail of that on notice. In general terms—and what I am about to say is not specific to a payment; I will have to check it—certainly with income reporting and change of circumstances, particularly in a student's place, there are things that we have noticed, as the secretary said, that people often get wrong. We do have quite an extensive information campaign around how important it is to tell us immediately if your circumstances change and to report your income.</p> <p>I know, as a general statement, those two are fairly high up there in terms of the sorts of things we see that are causing problems. We do have information sessions and products out there to help with that.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: Could you provide those figures to December, to see if we have seen a decrease in response to any actions you have taken? That would be very much appreciated.</p> <p>Ms Golightly: Certainly, Senator. [Page 31]</p>
12	Income Security Integrated System	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: Is it true that the Howard government, Mr Sterrenberg, locked us into this system for 10 years in 2014? Is that correct? That is the evidence you gave</p>

			<p>previously. Ms Campbell: In 2004 there was a contract signed for the software. Senator CAMERON: For 10 years. Ms Campbell: For 10 years. Senator CAMERON: What was the value of that? Ms Campbell: I do not have that with me. I will check whether Mr Sterrenberg has got it. Mr Sterrenberg: I do not. We can take it on notice. Ms Campbell: We will take it on notice. [Page 35]</p>
13	Joint Medicare / NDIS centre	Smith	<p>Senator SMITH: Do we have an indication of the sorts of numbers of people that are accessing the joint office? Mr Tidswell: I am not sure if I have that with me. Senator Payne: We do not have those NDIA figures with us. In terms of the Medicare system, Mr Tidswell may have those; I am not sure. Mr Tidswell: No, I do not have them, unless somebody behind me has got that. I certainly do not have that in my folder. We can take that on notice, Senator. [Page 36]</p>
14	Costs of allowance administration	Siewert	<p>a) Senator SIEWERT: You might need to take this on notice. Do you have figures on how much it costs to administer each allowance—so how much it costs to administer Newstart and Youth Allowance? Ms Campbell: We have a funding model with the Department of Finance where we are allocated a certain amount per customer on a certain allowance. I do not have that information with me. We could take that on notice. Senator SIEWERT: If you could take on notice then how much it costs to administer for a person on Newstart, Youth Allowance, carers payments and DSP. Ms Campbell: We will tell you what we are given to do it. Is like an average, a unit cost. That is what we can provide. [Pages 36-37]</p> <p>b) Senator SIEWERT: So then the question is: the amount that you calculated last time—do you have that, or do you have to take that on notice as well? Ms Campbell: I do not have that with me. We will give you that on notice. [Page 37]</p> <p>c) Senator SIEWERT: Do you get indexation? First of all, though, how do you calculate it? Ms Campbell: I cannot recall whether it is indexed or there is a base amount that is indexed. We will take that on notice as well.</p> <p>d) Senator SIEWERT: Thank you. It would be appreciated if you could take it on notice. So 2017-18. When did you last do it? Ms Campbell: Was it last year or the year before? 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, and then we get a new one in 2017-18. Senator SIEWERT: So that is what, four? Ms Campbell: It is about a four-year cycle, a forward estimates cycle. Senator SIEWERT: If you could take that on notice it would be appreciated. [Page 37]</p>

15	Payment processing – assets above threshold	Siewert	<p>a) Senator SIEWERT: If you could take that on notice it would be appreciated. Do you keep figures on people that apply—I am thinking of Newstart in particular—whose assets are above the threshold?</p> <p>Ms Campbell: I believe we do; those people that we reject. Yes.</p> <p>Ms Golightly: I think we do record that as a reason. But we will check.</p> <p>Senator SIEWERT: Could you take that on notice—if you do, obviously, and, if you do, how many?</p> <p>Ms Campbell: Yes. [Page 37]</p> <p>b) Senator SIEWERT: Can you take this on notice: how long does it take people to use up their assets and come back on? I know that is a bit difficult, because people have different levels of assets.</p> <p>Ms Campbell: There is a liquid waiting asset period which identifies if someone is likely to be going onto payment and that they have these liquid assets. There is a set of criteria around those. We work that out upfront, depending on how much money it is, how long before they will be able to go onto payment. We could provide some information on that. [Page 37]</p>
16	Tropical Cyclone Marcia - staff	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: Do you know how many additional staff were placed in the Fitzroy region for this incident? You can take it on notice.</p> <p>Senator Payne: We will take it on notice and get back to you. [Page 40]</p>
17	DHS Enterprise Agreement	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: Can you provide me, on notice, details of your productivity measures that you are looking at? How those productivity measures can be affected by the staff is on notice. I want you to delineate cost cutting from real productivity. Can you give me your definition of productivity?</p> <p>Ms Campbell: We will give you the definition according to the Australian government framework. We will provide you the information as per that framework. [Page 42]</p>
18	Farm Household Allowance	Bullock	<p>a) How many Farm Household Allowance claims are currently on hand?</p> <p>b) For these claims please provide a breakdown by the number of days (in 14 day periods) since the claim was submitted.</p> <p>c) How many Farm Household Allowance claims have been processed?</p> <p>d) How many of these were successful?</p> <p>e) For these claims please provide a breakdown by the number of days (in 14 day periods) from when the claim was submitted to when the first payment was made.</p>
19	Child Support matter - assessment	Xenophon	<p>Referring to a Child Support Program matter that has involved proceedings in the Family Court anonymised as “Pedrana and Pedrana and [Child Support Registrar]”:</p> <p>a) What is the total amount that the Department has been invoiced (i.e. external costs) in relation to and flowing from this matter; including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of Assessment

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review on Objection • Social Security Appeals Tribunal Review • Information Commissioner review • Ombudsman Review • Court Proceedings initiated by the Child Support Registrar or Department of Human Services • Court Proceedings initiated by either of the parents to which the Child Support Registrar was a party • Administrative Appeals Tribunal initiated by the Child Support Registrar or Department of Human Services • Noting the (probably) unusually complicated nature of this case, please provide an estimate of the total internal cost incurred by the Department in dealing with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of Assessment • Review on Objection • Social Security Appeals Tribunal Review • Information Commissioner review • Ombudsman Review • Court Proceedings • Administrative Appeals Tribunal? <p>b) Does the Department concede that all four matters described by the Secretary in her Senate Estimates testimony to Senator Xenophon on 26 February 2015 stem from a single Child Support Assessment?</p> <p>c) Does the Department concede that the initial Child Support Assessment was set aside by an objection review decision and that this objection review decision reduced the Child Support Assessment amount by between \$5,000 and \$6,000?</p> <p>d) In relation to ‘Matter One’ of the proceedings (Declarations sought by the Child Support Registrar in the Family Court) described by the Secretary in her Senate Estimates testimony to Senator Xenophon on 26 February 2015:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Can the Department confirm that the substantive issue raised in ‘Matter One’ centred about the use of Family Court Documents by the Child Support Agency? 2) On what date was the court application filed? 3) On what date was the idea of the Department meeting all reasonable legal cost in the matter raised between the parties? 4) Was this idea raised by the Department, the father or the mother? 5) On what date did the Department advise the father and mother that it would meet all reasonable legal costs in the matter?
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			<p>6) How much was spent on these particular proceedings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) in total; ii) for the Department's Costs; iii) for the Father's Cost; and iv) for the Mother's Costs? <p>7) Noting the matter was funded as a test case, can the Department advise whether it sought, as an alternate to seeking judicial declarations to clarify the law, to resolve the matter non litigiously with the father and then seek a change in the legislation to clarify the law?</p> <p>e) In relation to 'Matter Two' of the proceedings (Appeal to the Full Court on Matter One) described by the Secretary in her Senate Estimates testimony to Senator Xenophon on 26 February 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) On what date was the notice of appeal filed? 2) Did the Department write to the father inviting him to discontinue the appeal within 21 days or that cost orders would be sought against him and advising that those costs may include indemnity costs? 3) If so, on what date was that letter written? 4) On what date did the father withdraw his appeal? <p>f) In relation to 'Matter Three' of the proceedings (Appeal of the Social Security Appeal Tribunal decision and Application in Case) described by the Secretary in her Senate Estimates testimony to Senator Xenophon on 26 February 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) With respect to the Appeal against the Social Security Appeal Tribunal decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Does one of the substantive matters before the court centre about the failure of the Child Support Agency to attend to a concern of the inclusion of false and/or misleading and/or reckless information in a completed Change of Assessment application form? ii) It is understood from the Senate testimony that the Child Support Registrar and father had a different opinion as to whether concerns were raised during initial oral and written representations to the Agency about the inclusion of false and/or misleading and/or reckless information in a completed Change of Assessment application form. It is understood that the Commonwealth Ombudsman has looked into this issue and agrees with the father's view. Is this correct, and if it is correct, what impact has the Ombudsman's finding had on the Agency's stance in relation to their original opinion? iii) What are the nature of the costs being sought against the father in relation to the Appeal against the Social Security Appeal Tribunal decision? 2) With respect to the Application in a Case: <p>After the conclusion of 'Matter One', in which the Family Court declared that the Child Support Agency could use Family Court Documents in the exercise of its functions and powers, but added that "<i>the court has the ultimate supervisory control over an</i></p>
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			<p><i>inappropriate use of the information by the Registrar</i>”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Did the father raise concerns over inappropriate use of Family Court documents by the Child Support Agency in his objection to the original decision? ii) Did the father raise concerns over inappropriate use of Family Court documents by the Child Support Agency in his Social Security Appeals Tribunal Review of the objection? iii) Is one of the substantive issues in this case centred about the inappropriate use by the Child Support Registrar of documents sourced from Family Court proceedings? <p>g) Does the Department concede that a nexus exists between ‘Matter One’ and ‘Matter Three’?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Noting the Declaration made in favour of the Agency in the first matter, but that this matter on foot still centres about the use of court documents, how is the Department dealing with Family Court documents that are being tendered as part of Change of Assessment applications. 2) Noting the father has sought alternate dispute resolution, but this has been declined outright by the Agency, is it safe to assume that the Department wants a judicial ruling on this “inappropriate use” aspect of the current proceedings? 3) What are the nature of the costs being sought against the father in relation to the Application in a Case? 4) With respect to both the Appeal against the Social Security Appeal Tribunal decision and the Application in a Case, did the Department receive written legal advice as to the likely success of prospects of success of the appeal, and if so, on what date? 5) With respect to both the Appeal against the Social Security Appeal Tribunal decision and the Application in a Case, can the Department confirm that it is not open to reaching some negotiated settlement? <p>h) In relation to Matter Four (Administrative Appeal of a Decision of the Information Commissioner) of the proceedings described by the Secretary in her Senate Estimates testimony to Senator Xenophon on 26 February 2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is the cost estimate for the conduct of the proceedings? 2) Noting the application has been raised by the Department against a decision of the Information Commissioner on a “<i>very very important point of law</i>”, has the Department given considered to treating the matter as a test case and funding the father such that a strong argument can be put to the other side of the question? 3) Is it normal for the Department to litigate against a self-represented litigant on “<i>very very important point of law</i>”.
20	Young people – ‘age of independence’	Siewert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) How many young people under 18 were assisted by a DHS social workers during 2013-14? b) How many / percentage of young people does DHS expect will lose their access to income support, as it will be provided to the parents if the McClure changes proceed?

21	Telephony Overflow Contracts	Cameron	<p>a) Does the department currently have any contract arrangements with external sector call centre service providers? If Yes, with whom and for what services?</p> <p>b) What telephony over flow arrangements were in place prior to the use of external contractors?</p> <p>c) In what circumstances has the external contract arrangements been used in the past?</p> <p>d) Is the department's use of such arrangements in future going to reflect the circumstance of previous use or are there other circumstances in which external contract arrangements might be used?</p> <p>e) What current contracts are currently in place? What is the value of these contracts?</p>
22	Organisational Chart	Cameron	<p>In relation to the Organisation chart dated 2 March 2015 on the DHS website:</p> <p>a) The organisational chart no longer has photos of senior staff. Why is that?</p> <p>b) How many vacant positions are there?</p> <p>c) The position of Chief Financial Officer remains vacant. How long has the position been vacant now? Why?</p> <p>d) How many positions on the organisational chart are currently being filled by staff on Higher Duties?</p> <p>e) Please provide details of the functions, budget, work program and staff profile of the Welfare Payments Infrastructure Transformation Program division. Is this division undertaking preparatory work to enable the implementation of any decision to replace the Income Security Integrated System?</p> <p>f) Please provide details of the functions, budget, work program and staff profile of the eGovernment section.</p>
23	Staffing	Cameron	<p>What is the total headcount and ASL of department staff by State and Territory, and by Classification within each state and territory?</p>
24	Staffing – Irregular Intermittent Employees	Cameron	<p>a) What are the numbers of workers employed in the department's Interim and Intermittent Workforce over the past five financial years as well as year to date in the current financial year?</p> <p>b) How many individual workers within the department's Interim and Intermittent workforce have consecutive contracts or contracts with no more than one calendar break between the end of one contract and the start of another?</p> <p>c) How many individual workers have consecutive contracts as defined by my previous question have been on consecutive contracts for periods on greater than 6 months but less than 12 months, greater than twelve months but less than eighteen months or greater than eighteen months?</p> <p>d) What is the average duration of employment of a worker in the department's Interim and</p>

			Intermittent Workforce? e) Where are Interim and Intermittent Employees located? Please provide a list of the number of Casually (IIE) engaged staff by office including town or suburb details.
25	Staffing – Non-ongoing Workers	Cameron	What is the average duration of employment of a non-ongoing worker in the department?
26	Red Tape Reduction	Cameron	a) What specific activities have been impacted by the Red Tape Reduction Process with DHS to date? b) What are the total cashable savings as a result of the Red Tape Reduction Process to date? c) What are the net cashable savings from the Red Tape Reduction process when offset against any expenses occurred in relation to the identification and implementation of resulting changes?
27	Client Telephone Wait Times	Cameron	In regard to call wait times: a) Does the department have internal KPIs different to those publicly reported through budget papers and the annual report? If so, why? b) What is the internal KPI to measure the percentage of callers who achieve their service outcome at the first point of contact? 1) Is it the KPI called "First point of contact resolution"? 2) What was the KPI for 2013/14 and what was the result? 3) What is the KPI for 2014/15 and what is the result by week and month to date?
28	Telephone “queue surfing”	Cameron	The Ombudsman’s report 1/2014 into service delivery complaints about Centrelink included the following two recommendations: 1 (c) In consultation with the Department of Social Services and other stakeholders, develop performance standards for speed to answer calls on each of Centrelink customer enquiry lines; and 1 (d) Publicise and regularly report Centrelink’s performance against the performance standards developed under recommendation 1(c). I refer to the answer provided in the table to HS 46 (f) from Supplementary Estimates showing the department’s response to the Ombudsman’s recommendation 1(d) which was: The department will regularly report on performance to the Ombudsman’s Office. The department does not support publicising performance more broadly because of the risk of customers ‘queue surfing’ resulting in adverse outcomes for customers. a) Please explain what this phenomenon of “queue surfing” is, and provide details of the evidence that it is a pervasive practice? b) What are the “risks” involved from clients “queue surfing”? c) What is the basis of the department's assertion that people wanting a problem solved, or wanting access to timely services, will engage in the practice of “queue surfing” if data on

			<p>performance is published and made more transparent that is currently the case?</p> <p>d) Why can't KPI performance information be presented in real time or some other regular periodic way on the DHS website?</p>
29	Customer Aggression	Cameron	<p>a) How many incidents of customer aggression were reported in 2013-14 and 2014-15 to date?</p> <p>b) What strategies has the department put in place to reduce the number of incidents occurring and to minimise the risk of injury to staff and other customers?</p>
30	Freedom of Information	Cameron	<p>The Office of Australian Information Commissioner (OIA) conducted an own motion investigation into FOI issues in DHS. In its report dated 2 December 2014 the OIA made 13 recommendations.</p> <p>a) What is the expected timeframe for the implementation of each of the recommendations?</p> <p>b) What steps have already been taken to implement the recommendations?</p>
31	Home Care Payments	Cameron	<p>The 5 February 2015 Aged and Community Services Australia weekly report includes an item:</p> <p><u>Update on payments</u></p> <p>We have been asked to inform you that the Department of Human Services (DHS) will begin to dialogue with providers who have been underpaid or overpaid as part of the home care payments process during 2014. There are approximately 200 providers who have mostly received overpayments. Depending on the amounts, repayment schedules will be individually negotiated.</p> <p>a) I understand this is a manual process, when will the home care payment process be fully online?</p> <p>b) When is DHS going to resolve the problems with Medicare Claiming for Home Care Providers</p> <p>c) What is the level overpayment and underpayment and what steps is DHS taking to resolve the problem?</p>
32	Aged Care Means Testing	Cameron	<p>a) When is DHS going to resolve the problems with incorrect Means Tests for entry to Residential Care and Home Care Packages?</p> <p>b) When is DHS going to resolve the problems with the delays in Means Tests processing for entry to Residential Care and Home Care Packages?</p> <p>c) What are the information technology issues of the means testing process and when will they be resolved?</p>
33	Child Support	Cameron	<p>a) Have Intensive Collections Officers (ICO) been diverted from their normal management of debt duties to take mainstream phone calls?</p> <p>b) How many ICO staff have been diverted and what percentage of their weekly hours are now spent on mainstream calls?</p>

			c) What impact has this diversion of resources had on the levels of debt collection and/or debt write off's?
34	Disability Support Pension - Reviews	Cameron	<p>The government has started to review those on the DSP between the ages of 18 and 35 years.</p> <p>a) What is the rationale for reviewing those assessed with mental health issues?</p> <p>b) How many people have been assessed?</p> <p>c) How many people as a result of this review have been removed from DSP and transferred to the Newstart payment, Youth allowance, another payment?</p> <p>d) How many of those who have as a result of losing access to the DSP have appealed this decision?</p> <p>e) How many appeals have been successful?</p> <p>f) Does the department track the impact on these citizens of losing access to the DSP in terms of increased homelessness and reduced mental health?</p>
35	Disability Support Pension – Claim Procedures	Cameron	<p>a) DHS has abolished the Treating Doctor Report for certain new DSP claimants and replaced it with a medical checklist. What data will DHS collect to monitor the impact of this measure?</p> <p>b) DHS has introduced Government Contracted Doctors review of DSP claims where a Job Capacity Assessor has recommended that the person is medically qualified for DSP. What data will DHS collect to monitor the impact of this measure? What will this measure cost to implement?</p>
36	Job Capacity Assessments	Cameron	<p>a) In 2013/14 and 1 July 2014 to date how many Job Capacity Assessors were employed by state/territory by employment permanent/ non-permanent.</p> <p>b) In 2013/14 and 1 July 2014 to date, how many DSP claims were rejected by state/territory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) For people who had JCA by telephone. 2) For people who had JCA in person.
37	Social Workers	Cameron	<p>I refer to HS 35 from previous estimates and note that social workers delivered 77,557 face to face appointments in 2013-14 and received 30,251 referrals from Centrelink call queues.</p> <p>a) Given the Government's 2014-15 budget measures which cause further distress to those people on the DSP and Newstart has as the Department seen an increase in social worker referrals from 1 July 2014?</p> <p>b) If so, will the Department seek to increase the social worker staffing level?</p>
38	Disaster Assistance	Cameron	<p>In regard to Tropical Cyclone Marcia:</p> <p>a) How many DHS staff were placed into the Fitzroy region of Queensland to assist communities affected by Marcia?</p>

			<p>b) How many AGDRP payments have been made (adults and children)?</p> <p>c) What AGDRP assistance is available to those people whose residence was not damaged but were unable to gain access their principal place of residence for at least 24 hours; or were stranded in their principal place of residence for at least 24 hours; or as a result of the disaster, the person's principal place of residence was without electricity, water, gas, sewerage service or another essential service for at least 48 hours?</p>
39	Service Delivery Reform and Contestability	Cameron	<p>a) What are the estimated levels of online transactions for each online service offer for the current 2014-15 financial year?</p> <p>b) What are the projected levels of online transactions for each online service offer for the 2015-16 financial year?</p> <p>c) Is the department investigating the contestability of current DHS service delivery? If so what functions and services are under consideration?</p> <p>d) Please outline steps DHS is taking to comply with the government's contestability policy?</p> <p>e) Are any functions or services of the department quarantined from this process?</p>
40	Corporate Learnings	Cameron	<p>In answer HS4 to Supplementary Estimates the department said it is currently reviewing the procedures to ensure that learnings are more systematically captured and retained in the future.</p> <p>a) Have procedures been reviewed and could you elaborate on what procedures have been put in place?</p> <p>b) Did Mr Rimmer provide a de-brief to the Secretary before he left?</p>
41	External Conferences and Corporate Learnings	Cameron	<p>In response to HS 30 to Supplementary Estimates requesting a list of external conferences that DHS staff have presented to the department answered it does not maintain a central database of this information.</p> <p>a) Will the capture of this information be included in the review of learnings referred to in HS 4?</p>
42	ICT Service Levels	Cameron	<p>Arising from HS 28 from Supplementary Estimates:</p> <p>a) How many customer service interruptions since 21 November 2014?</p> <p>b) What was the total duration for each and what was the business impact?</p> <p>c) Have the causes of the outages been identified?</p> <p>d) What remedial action has or is being taken to rectify the problems?</p> <p>e) What is the reliability performance target for the IT systems and what was achieved in the June quarter 2013-14 and September quarter 2014-15 and December quarter 2014-15?</p>
43	Shopfronts	Cameron	<p>a) Please list every DHS service point as at 1 July 2014 by location and service type.</p> <p>b) Please list new service points added since 1 July 2014 by opening date and service type.</p>

			<p>c) Please list every service point closed since 1 July 2014 by closure date, location and type and which co-located office now covers the closed office.</p> <p>d) Please list every service point by location and type planned to be closed to 30 June 2015 and to be closed in 2015-16.</p> <p>e) Please list every service point by location and type planned to be opened to 30 June 2015 and to be opened in 2015-16.</p>
44	Mobile Apps	Cameron	<p>a) Please list the mobile apps available to customers for self-service applications.</p> <p>b) Which services are available through the apps?</p> <p>c) Which services are not available through the apps?</p> <p>d) Which IT systems need to be upgraded to allow the wider use of apps?</p> <p>e) How many apps have been downloaded to date?</p> <p>f) How many transactions have been completed through them?</p> <p>g) Do the apps meet Apple or Google design guidelines? If not, please list the areas of non-conformity and when the dates when the apps will conform.</p> <p>h) How many complaints has the department received about the apps in 2013-14 and 2014-15 to date?</p>
45	Enterprise Bargaining	Cameron	<p>a) What is a notional 1.5% pay increase for all DHS employees per annum for the next three years as a percentage of the department's budget?</p> <p>b) What percentage wage increase did DHS budget for in 2014/15?</p>
46	Centrepay Review	Cameron	<p>I refer to HS 119 from Additional Estimates in 2014 concerning the independent review of Centrepay.</p> <p>a) Please provide an updated DHS response to each of the recommendations contained in Chapter 11 Recommendations for future action of the Report.</p> <p>b) Has any policy work been undertaken by the Department about the appropriateness of "consumer leases" for Centrepay, given other interest-bearing credit products are barred from Centrepay?</p>
47	myGov	Cameron	<p>a) How many users are now registered with myGov?</p> <p>b) Are there any outstanding security issues with myGov? What is the timetable for their resolution?</p> <p>c) Is the department advising customers that the only way to communicate with Centrelink in the future will be via myGov?</p> <p>d) What advice is the department providing to customers who are unable or unwilling to take up digital communication options?</p>

48	eGovernment	Cameron	<p>a) Have any DHS staff been transferred or seconded to the Digital Transformation Office (DTO) in the Department of Communications? Is so list the staffing profile.</p> <p>b) What is the relationship of the eGovernment section in DHS with the DTO?</p>
49	Disability Support Pension – Participation Plans	Cameron	<p>a) How many people under 35 have had a Participation Plan developed under the recent Budget changes?</p> <p>b) Provide an overview of these plans (eg. not required to look for work, training, etc.)</p> <p>c) How many have had their payments suspended?</p> <p>d) How many have has their payments cancelled?</p> <p>e) How many people would be required to develop a Participation Plan if the age requirement were increased to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 40 2) 45 3) 50
50	Internal Reviews	Cameron	In various answers to questions HS160, HS 166, HS 167 from Supplementary Estimates about Internal Reviews the department has included a new descriptor "Explained". Please clarify the term and how is its use monitored?
51	Service Delivery	Cameron	<p>I refer to the report: <i>How does the National Welfare Rights Network add value to clients?</i> prepared by Susan Bell Research for the National Welfare Rights Network dated December 2014 and released on 19 February 2015.</p> <p>a) What is the Department of Human Services (DHS) response to this report and its findings?</p> <p>b) Is DHS aware of any qualitative research of a similar nature which sheds light on how people negotiate the Centrelink system? If so, please provide a copy of the research?</p> <p>c) Does DHS see any value in the department commissioning a more extensive piece of research that could help improve service delivery outcomes and find better ways of meeting the needs and aspirations of those who use the department's services? If so, when will the department commission the work?</p>
52	Consultation with the Department of Industry	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: That is good. That is helpful. You did indicate to me, in October, that you would be raising the issue of local content with the department of industry. What discussions have taken place on that?</p> <p>Mr Shepherd: Can I just clarify your question? Was that in relation to the question you asked about consultation with the department of industry?</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Yes.</p> <p>Mr Shepherd: There has been consultation with the department of industry. We have met with them twice.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: So you have met them twice.</p> <p>Mr Shepherd: Yes.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Was this after I raised it in the Senate estimates?</p>

			<p>Mr Shepherd: They actually participated in a workshop too about the design of the business case and we have had subsequently two additional meetings with them.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: When was this participation?</p> <p>Mr Shepherd: I can get this on notice to you, but the initial discussions with that department in its portfolio were almost two years ago when the business case started. They participated in a cross-agency workshop in December and there have been two officer-to-officer specific discussions with the department of industry.</p>
53	Aged Care – Wait Times	Seiwert	<p>a) What is the time frame for assessing income and assets test for aged care?</p> <p>b) How has this changed since the reforms on 1st July?</p> <p>c) In particular how have waiting times changed?</p> <p>d) Are you receiving complaints from the change of process?</p>
54	Aged Care – Home Care Providers	Polley	<p>The Acting Dep Sec Ms Carolyn Smith informed the Community Affairs Legislation Committee that issues around the Medicare payments for home care providers had been resolved.</p> <p>a) Can she explain how a number of providers have significant amounts outstanding, including one provider who has outstanding payments dating back to August 2014?</p> <p>b) What is being done to ensure the information provided by DHS in relation to the resolution of issues is consistent with the experience of providers?</p>
55	Client Telephone Wait Times	Cameron	<p>Please update the table concerning call waiting times for each call line type provided in answer HS34 from Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014 for the monthly period July 2014 to date.</p>
56	Waiting Times	Cameron	<p>Please update the information provided in HS 46 from Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014.</p> <p>a) What is the monthly average shopfront wait time for the period September 2013 to date?</p> <p>b) What are the monthly average wait times by shopfront for the period June 2014 to date?</p> <p>c) What is the monthly average wait time for Centrelink-related-calls for the period June 2014 to date?</p> <p>d) What is the number of successful Centrelink calls in 2013-14 and 2014-15 to date?</p> <p>e) What is the number of Centrelink inbound calls in 2013-14 and 2014-15 to date?</p> <p>f) Please update Attachment A concerning the Ombudsman's – Own Motion – Investigation into service delivery complaints about Centrelink – Recommendation Table to include the status as at 30 September 2014 and 31 December 2014.</p>