

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2015-16 Additional Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number: 1.11 Student Payments**

**Question No: SQ16-000007**

**Topic: Random Sample Survey Programme**

**Hansard page: Written**

**Senator Rachel Siewert asked:**

In relation to the Department of Social Services Random Sample Survey Programme, why are the accuracy rates for ABSTUDY, Austudy and Parenting Payment (Partnered) all below 90 per cent? Has the Department identified further steps to improve accuracy in relation to these payments?

**Answer:**

For Austudy and ABSTUDY, available evidence suggests that the key factor affecting payment accuracy is delays or failure to notify DHS of changes in study-loads and earned income; changes to study-load being the greatest risk factor. The Strengthening Student Obligations measure (which falls under the broader Strengthening Integrity of Welfare Payments 2015 Budget measure) is due to be fully implemented in July 2016. It is linked to the 'Customer Reporting and Declarations' element of the broader measure and the key driver for the measure is to improve payment accuracy for student payments. It is anticipated that this would have a positive impact on payment accuracy performance in future.

For Parenting Payment Partnered, the accuracy rate did pick up in the last trimester from 80 to 84.5 per cent but still below the benchmark of 95 per cent. The key reason for the lower than expected accuracy rate is partner income. DSS and DHS are continuing to work on strategies to further improve the timely and accurate reporting of partner income.