

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 29 MAY 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Wait Times for Centrelink Services

Question reference number: HS 17

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard page 104

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 27 July 2012

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: Thank you. That is the average time. What would be the maximum time?

Mr Tidswell: I will search that for you.

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Mr Tidswell: Senator, I do not appear to have that figure with me. I am trying to chase-up somebody who might have on them that figure on the maximum wait time for Centrelink services. If we cannot get that tonight we will take it on notice.

Answer:

For the period 1 July 2011 to 30 April 2012, the average wait time experienced for Centrelink services in a Service Centre was around 14 minutes. Eighty eight per cent of customers were seen in less than thirty minutes and more than 99 per cent of customers were seen in less than an hour.

A maximum wait time of 3 hours 21 minutes was experienced on 4 April 2012. This was an extreme circumstance due to reduced staff numbers as a result of unexpected absence. Some customers do wait for extended periods if they need to see a specialist officer such as a social worker or if they wish to be seen by a specific staff member.