

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 29 MAY 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Voluntary Income Management

Question reference number: HS 20

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard pages 106-107

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

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Senator SIEWERT: The department very helpfully gave us, without my even having to ask for it, a very handy list of who is on income management. I am wondering if it is possible to find out the length of time in which people are coming on and off voluntary income management.

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Senator SIEWERT: What I am interested in is the turnover, now that the process has changed for voluntary income management. I have the figures on how many people are actually on it now. What I am interested in is the people coming on and off, now that we have had a period of time since the new process—now that you have to stay on there for a certain period of time.

Mr Tidswell: We have some information here for you—the average time on income management between 9 August 2010 and 31 December 2011.

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Senator SIEWERT: Thank you. The period for those on voluntary income management will cover the time during which the requirement to stay on for three months was brought in, won't it?

Mr Tidswell: I am not quite sure. I will have to check on that. We might have to take that on notice.

- b) Senator SIEWERT: Thank you. What I am interested in finding out is whether the requirement to stay on there for a certain period of time has changed people's behaviour. Are they now staying on longer than that period of time or are they coming off? We have discussed this previously.

Mr Tidswell: What we might do is run this dataset that we have here—and I am not quite sure how difficult it will be to get that data—to see if we can compare. But as you know this is relatively new and so were still dealing with the fact that it is early days in terms of movement on and off.

Senator SIEWERT: I appreciate that. That is what I am trying to find out. If it is too early, it is too early.

Answer:

- a) From 1 July 2012, customers will have to remain on Voluntary Income Management for a compulsory minimum period of 13 weeks. As this change has not come into effect, data to cover 'on and offs' cannot be provided.
- b) Data relating to the new requirement to stay on for a specified period is not available, as the date of effect of the change is 1 July 2012.