

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 29 MAY 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Income Management – Access to Balances

Question reference number: HS 21

Senator: Siewert

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Question:

Senator SIEWERT: How many complaints did you receive in the last period about phone access to Centrelink and people's accounts from the Northern Territory in particular? I am trying to see whether the issues that we had in terms of phone access to people's accounts have been resolved.

Mr Tidswell: While Roxanne is searching to see if we have an item that breaks that down, as you know we put a lot of effort into this. My intel tells me that we are pretty well on top of access and providing good support 24 by seven so people get access to their moneys and the ability to transact their business wherever they might be.

Ms Ramsey: To clarify, are you talking about complaints that would come via the phone lines?

Senator SIEWERT: There is obviously the whole appeals process. There were a lot of complaints from people who could not properly access their account details. I acknowledge that you did put a lot of effort into trying to resolve that. What I am trying to find out is whether that has been resolved.

Ms Ramsey: We would need to go back in and look at our complaint data. We do not have any data with us at the moment and I am not sure that we can go down to that sort of granularity to provide that. But I will take it on notice and look at whether we can give you some more detailed information around that.

Answer:

For the period 1 July 2011 to 30 April 2012, the department received 72 phone access complaints about Income Management and/or BasicsCard from customers located in Zone Northern Australia, which includes the Northern Territory and parts of Western Australia and South Australia. The department is unable to provide specific data on Northern Territory only customers.