

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 29 MAY 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Child Support Agency – Appeals of Decisions

Question reference number: HS 41

Senator: Fifield

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) How many CSA decisions were appealed in 2010-2011?
- b) How many CSA decisions were appealed in 2011-2012?
- c) How many of these appeals were upheld?

Answer:

- a) and b) Table 1 shows how many child support objection decisions were appealed in 2010-11 and from 1 July 2011 to 31 May 2012.

Table 1

| | 2010-11 | 2011-12 (to 31 May 2012) |
|---|---------|-----------------------------|
| Objections ¹ | 17,190 | 14,220 |
| SSAT Applications for Review ² | 2,525 | 1,882 |

¹ Parents may seek an internal review of a child support decision, through the objection process. If dissatisfied with the outcome, they may seek external review through the Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT).

² Last year, the SSAT stopped using the term 'appeals'. Appeals are now referred to as 'applications for review', consistent with the wording used in the legislation.

- c) Table 2 shows the number and percentage of SSAT applications for review which were changed (upheld) compared to those which were unchanged.

Table 2

| | 2010-11 | | 2011-12 (to 31 May 2012) | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| | Unchanged ³ | Changed ⁴ | Unchanged | Changed |
| Objections Finalised (No.) | 10,698 | 5,948 | 8,389 | 4,878 |
| Objections Finalised (%) | 64.3% | 35.7% | 63.2% | 36.8% |
| SSAT Applications Finalised (No.) | 1,275 | 989 | 1,102 | 825 |
| SSAT Applications Finalised (%) | 56.3% | 43.7% | 57.2% | 42.8% |

³ Unchanged include applications withdrawn or dismissed, as well as decisions affirmed.

⁴ Changed include objections allowed or part allowed, and SSAT decisions set aside or varied.