

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2013-14 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 2

Question No: 116

Topic: Housing Payment Deduction Scheme

Hansard Page: 03/06/2013 - CA110

Senator Ludlam asked:

Can you provide data showing that the enactment of the Housing Payment Deduction Scheme will reduce homelessness?

Answer:

There is a range of data and evidence supporting the Housing Payment Deduction Scheme (HPDS) which will ensure that those tenants at greatest risk of eviction have payments for rent and arrears automatically deducted from their income support payments, preventing eviction due to an unmanageable build-up of arrears.

- Public housing authorities report that they evict 700 - 900 tenants¹ a year, including families, with children due to arrears;
- A further 1,111 tenants abandoned their properties leaving arrears in 2011-12 (excludes Tas);
- Couples with and without children seeking accommodation due to homelessness most commonly cited eviction or being asked to leave their housing as the main reason for doing so, and being unable to pay rent as a primary cause of eviction;²
- Research has found that tenancy failures were strongly associated with the discontinuation of voluntary rent deductions, and public housing tenants who signed up to the voluntary rent deductions were less likely to be evicted with arrears or to abandon their properties, than those who never signed up.³

¹ Unpublished data provided to FaHCSIA by state and territory governments

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Homeless people in SAAP: SAAP National Data Collection annual report*, 2008

³ Brotherhood of St Laurence, Office of Housing Rent Deduction Service Evaluation of the March 2003 Changes, May 2005