

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 3 JUNE 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Telephony Services – transferred calls

Question reference number: HS 11

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard pages 30–31

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 24 July 2015

Number of pages: 2

Question:

a) Senator SIEWERT: Do you keep records of how many are having to be transferred?
Mr Tidswell: I do not know whether I have that figure in front of me. We will have to take that on notice.

Senator CAMERON: You do. If you look at page 72 of the ANAO report—I was just looking at it, fortuitously—they say that it used to be 40 per cent that were transferred. It is now 29 per cent.

Senator SIEWERT: I want to know the figure for this year.

Mr Tidswell: We do not have those figures. We acknowledge that in the early days there was a higher transfer rate than we would have liked. We really worked hard. The aim here is to guide the customer to the right place.

Senator SIEWERT: I understand what you are saying. I am trying to find out what the figures are.

b) Senator SIEWERT: So there is the issue around transfer where it is a really complex issue and they need to be transferred. There is the issue around transfer where you are dealing with somebody who does not know all of the detail because they are irregular and intermittent staff, and people are being transferred anyway.

Ms Campbell: We will often have staff under training who are full-time, ongoing staff and who will not be able to deal with an issue because in the course of the conversation it becomes outside their skill set. I am not sure whether we define why calls are transferred. We will take that on notice and get back to you.

Senator SIEWERT: If you could.

Ms Campbell: I do want to be clear that we should not take transfer as being a bad outcome.

Senator SIEWERT: I understand that. That is why I am asking around the two issues. I realise there is that complexity. Could you take that on notice for the two?

Answer:

- a) For 2014–15 (to 31 May 2015), 30 per cent of calls answered by irregular and intermittent staff were transferred. The corresponding figure for the same period in 2013–14 is 36 per cent.
- b) The department does not have data that shows why a call is transferred.