

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 3 JUNE 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Centrepay

Question reference number: HS 27

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Hansard page 75

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Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator CAMERON: Have you got a program for consultation?

Mr Box: Yes, there is a program for consultation. Consultation has started. There has been draft documentation for the new terms and conditions provided to stakeholders. There has been a video hook-up and a telephone hook-up with stakeholders. The exact list of the names that Mr Learmonth gave you are parties to those consultations.

Senator CAMERON: Can you take it on notice and provide me a list of who you have consulted with, where you have consulted and the outcome of the consultations?

Mr Box: Definitely.

Answer:

The department has consulted, on the implementation of the changes announced in the media release of 22 May 2015 by the Minister for Human Services, with the following organisations:

- Australian Bankers' Association
- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Australian Securities and Investments Commission
- Australian Energy Regulator
- Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund
- Consumer Action Law Centre
- Consumer Household Equipment Rental Providers Association
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of Social Services
- Financial Counselling Australia
- Financial Rights Legal Centre
- Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network
- National Welfare Rights Network
- Office of Commonwealth Ombudsman
- Treasury

Participants in these consultations were initially provided with a verbal overview of the planned changes to Centrepay and the planned approach for implementation of, and transition to, the new Centrepay framework.

Participants were provided on 19 May 2015 with a written overview of the Centrepay changes, a copy of a draft of the new Centrepay Policy and Terms and an excerpt from the draft Procedural Guide for Businesses. Participants were invited to provide questions on the documents by 26 May 2015 and comments by 2 June 2015.

Participants were invited to participate in a forum to discuss the changes which was held by video and teleconference on 1 June 2015.

Centrepay is undergoing a continuing change process, and comments received in the consultations covered a range of matters. Some of those matters went to implementation of announced decisions, some concerned general administration of Centrepay, and some went to the policy decisions themselves.

The department will be undertaking a range of further stakeholder engagement activities, in the course of implementing the transition to the new Centrepay framework. The department is also communicating directly with businesses currently approved to participate in Centrepay, and with customers who are or may potentially be particularly affected by the key policy changes announced on 22 May 2015.

Comments already received have informed finalisation of documents being published in the course of transition to the new Centrepay Policy and Terms.