

## **Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee**

### **BUDGET ESTIMATES – 3 JUNE 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

#### **Department of Human Services**

**Topic:** Online Reporting – Income data

**Question reference number:** HS 31

**Senator:** Siewert

**Type of question:** Hansard pages 15 and 16

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

**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

Senator SIEWERT: Can I ask a question, because somebody has just fed back saying that they have been told to go and record their data online for their earnings from their investments, and they cannot do it online. There is no provision for them to do it online; is that correct?

Ms Campbell: I do not know.

Senator Payne: It depends in which program, which payment.

Senator SIEWERT: Pensioner.

Senator Payne: Is it income stream report?

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, income stream report on the changes to their investments.

Mr Tidswell: I am happy to take the individual details.

Senator Payne: It is very hard to answer like that, Senator Siewert.

Mr Tidswell: I have a father in that very circumstance, and we have him online changing his set of circumstances as things vary from time to time. But as both the minister and Ms Campbell have said, it is difficult, with all of the things that we do and the different products that people are on. If we can have some details, we can follow it up for you.

Senator SIEWERT: He is receiving a pension, and states:

We must notify Centrelink of any changes above \$2,000 in the value of our assets.

So it is the value of the assets.

Given that the value of our self-managed superannuation fund varies from stockmarket movements, we typically need to advise Centrelink at least once a month, sometimes twice. This can only be done by phone or by visiting a Centrelink office.

This is the lived experience of someone right now.

Mr Tidswell: So effectively, if we can get that information, we can find out what is going on. What often happens is you may not have the level of access to do that, so you need to increase the level of access to do it.

Senator SIEWERT: What do you mean, 'the level of access'?

Mr Tidswell: The level of security access when you go on line to do that, so that we know who you are, you have provided extra information so that we can make sure that these things are done appropriately.

Senator Payne: I must say, even in the last 12 to 18 months in this particular role, the department has been transitioning a number of payments and capacities to report into the online space as well, but it does not happen overnight.

Senator SIEWERT: This says, 'It has not permitted changes to superannuation fund asset values.' Would that be one of the things that you are currently transitioning?

Senator Payne: We will follow that up for you.

Senator SIEWERT: So this particular concern is that they just get busy, busy, busy, busy, busy, busy, and they end up driving down to Centrelink.

Ms Campbell: We will follow up on that one. I think you said it was self-managed superannuation funds, which may be different from the other superannuation funds where we have direct data matching. We will need to look at that one.

**Answer:**

Any update to existing income streams, outside the income stream review, is not yet available online but is scheduled for implementation in the second half of the 2015-16 financial year. The customer needs to notify the department of any changes to the value of their income and assets above \$2,000. Various income sources and assets can be updated online. From 15 June 2015, managed investments and superannuation (non-income stream) can be updated using the online service via the customer's myGov account.