



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**

**Serena Wilson PSM**  
Deputy Secretary

Senator Zed Seselja  
Committee Chair  
Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Seselja

I am writing to provide corrections and clarification to the information that my Department provided on the evening of Thursday 4 June 2015, at the Committee's Budget Estimates proceedings.

Firstly, I refer to the Hansard in relation to an answer provided by Cath Halbert to a question from Senator Siewert, as recorded on page 107 of the Committee's Hansard, which I have copied below.

***“Senator SIEWERT:** I want to move onto the waiting period process. I want to ask about numbers and the process now with this new approach. I asked in employment about the process that will be undertaken. Young people would be on a waiting period but they would be under Centrelink as was proposed with the previous assessment. So they register–*

***Ms Halbert:** They register as an unemployed with mental illness looking for work.”*

The Hansard has recorded an inaudible part of the response provided by Ms Halbert as being “with mental illness”. To clarify, this response refers to the process of registering as unemployed and looking for work, which applies to all job seekers and is not limited to those with mental illness.

Secondly, I refer to the answers provided by Cath Halbert to a question from Senator Siewert, as recorded on pages 107 and 108 of the Hansard, which I have copied below.

**“Senator SIEWERT:** *If they did a 26-week placement, though, they would have to then serve another waiting period.*

**Ms Halbert:** *If they were in stream A and not in any of the other exemption categories.*

**Senator SIEWERT:** *What other things do you do?*

**Ms Halbert:** *There are three reasons why you would not be subject to the waiting period. One is if you are transferring from another income support payment, such as a person who has been on carer payment who is no longer caring or a sole parent who had lost care of their child, or if you are in one of the exemption categories, which is, as we said, job seekers placed in streams B and C, disability employment service participants, parents with 35 per cent or more care of a child, young people leaving or in state care and job seekers with a temporary activity test exemption. They would be exempt from the waiting period for the duration of the exemption. Then there are those that I just mentioned, those who have already served the four-week waiting period in the last six months.”*

To clarify the answer to this question, those transferring from another payment, except those transferring from Youth Allowance (student), will not be subject to the four week waiting period. Those transferring from Youth Allowance (student) will be subject to the four week waiting period, unless they are exempt from the measure under one of the exemption categories or have served a four week waiting period in the six months preceding their claim for income support to which the four week waiting period applies.

Finally, I wish to request a correction to page 110 of the Hansard, which incorrectly attributes an answer provided by Cath Halbert to Ms C Smith. I have copied the exchange below for your reference.

**“Senator Fifield:** *Also there are significant numbers of people who will meet one of the exemption categories.*

**Senator SIEWERT:** *There are 85,000 young people who will not.*

**Ms C Smith:** *No.”*

I trust that the Committee is satisfied with the information provided.

Yours sincerely



Serena Wilson

30 June 2015

Lead by example

value diversity | respect diversity | celebrate diversity