

## Department of Human Services - Budget Estimates 2016-17 Index of Questions on Notice

QON No.	Broad topic	Senator	Question
1	Senate Additional Estimates – overdue answers to questions on notice - status	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: Minister, do you have any idea what the delay is? These are well overdue.</p> <p>Senator Payne: I do not, but I am very happy to seek a response to that. I understand, and I stand to be corrected by the chair with advice from the secretariat, that there were about 155 or 156 questions in total and 128 of those have been returned with answers. So that would leave 28 or so unanswered, and I will ascertain their status. [page 156]</p>
2	Senate Additional Estimates – overdue answers to questions on notice – Minister’s obligation	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: Minister, where do you see the minister's obligation being on this?</p> <p>Senator Payne: I have already said that I will seek advice from the minister on the matter for you. Obviously, as I indicated, there are in excess of 150 questions. Of those, 128 have been answered. A relatively small number have not. I gather from your questioning that this question is part of that number. I will seek some advice on that for you.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: It is not just a relatively small number. It is some of the most important questions that have been in writing to the minister and to the department. There are responsibilities to answer questions and they have not been met.</p> <p>Senator Payne: And I have said that I will seek advice from the minister on that for you. [page 158]</p>
3	Youth Allowance (Student)-processing delays	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: When was the minister advised there was a problem?</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: I do not know exactly. I am slightly challenged because I was on some long service leave and only returned on 28 or 29 February. When I returned to my substantive position, this was the highest priority for me. I suspect I would have personally briefed the minister face-to-face on these matters around that time, when I returned.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: What date was that?</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: About 28 or 29 February. However, I am sure we provided some advice previously about what we were doing in that area.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Can you take on notice to provide the dates when the minister was briefed on this issue?</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: Yes, Senator. [page 169]</p>

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4	WPIT – briefing for Opposition	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: Because we do not have much time, would you be in a position to give me—the opposition—a more detailed briefing on this?</p> <p>Mr Murphy: I will take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator Payne: You might have to wait about eight weeks.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: How might you allow the opposition to have a briefing?</p> <p>Senator Payne: You are as optimistic as ever, Senator Cameron! [page 174]</p>
5	Customer satisfaction – international benchmarking	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: What is the international standard for customer service organisations?</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: We often benchmark against other like organisations around the world, and we are commensurate with those like organisations: Work and Pensions in the UK, Service Canada in Canada, and the American equivalent, the Social Security Administration.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: On notice, can you provide me details of the benchmarking that you have undertaken on customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: We will take that on notice, yes.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: And not just the details of it but the results that you have of that benchmarking, so it can be compared on why you cannot meet your targets of customer satisfaction. [pages 176-177]</p>

QON No.	Broad topic	Senator	Question
6	Other claim processing delays	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: Going back to the Medicare payment system, were any other of your programs affected by the change from the blue-green screen to the new system?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Let me ask a specific question on it: was the farm household allowance put into the SAP system?</p> <p>Mr Sterrenberg: Yes, it was.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Aged care payments?</p> <p>Mr Sterrenberg: Yes—one tranche of aged care; it was the home care.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Okay. Are they still being delivered by the SAP system?</p> <p>Mr Sterrenberg: They are currently running on the SAP system, yes.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Were there any delays in either the farm household allowance or the aged care payments?</p> <p>Mr Sterrenberg: Can you be more specific about—</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Similar to the youth allowance—did the changeover produce a build-up of unpaid claims?</p> <p>Mr Sterrenberg: Not that I am aware of.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Not that you are aware of. Is there anyone who can tell me better than 'not that I am aware of'?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: I understand that what happened with these other areas was that there were fewer delays—though there were still delays—but there was more incorrect information of payments. Is that correct?</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: I do not have that information with me. Somebody else in the room might have that information, but—</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Can anyone help me?</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: effectively we are on top of doing our work in that area.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: You are on top of it? Can you take those questions on notice, then?</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: Yes. [pages 177-178]</p>

QON No.	Broad topic	Senator	Question
7	Variations in work undertaken by DHS	Cameron	<p>Mr Tidswell: Senator, it is important to draw a distinction here. Because we are a service delivery agency, we rise and fall on the work that comes to us from the policy settings. In that reduction of revenue, there is work we will not do next financial year. There are things that have moved to other departments, where we lose the staff and the revenue, and there are things that were planned to proceed in the next financial year, in the previous budget, but they are not going ahead.</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: Can you give me a list of them on notice?</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: Certainly. [page 180]</p>
8	Expected peaks in service delivery	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: Just wait a minute, Mr Tidswell. Can you provide me details of your expected peaks by delivery—</p> <p>Mr Tidswell: Absolutely. We will take that on notice. [page 181]</p>
9	Briefings for the Opposition	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: Minister, I should indicate that I remember that when I asked—Mr Tidswell, you have taken it on notice, and I think, Minister Payne, you have taken it on notice—for a briefing on the WPIT the minister wrote to me and said that I would not be getting a briefing and that I would have to ask in the forums that are available to me: questions on notice in the Senate, questions without notice and estimates. I must say—and thanks very much—that when you were minister and I asked for a briefing I got a briefing, and I appreciate that. Could you ask the minister for an explanation as to why briefings were previously provided to the opposition and why that has changed under his ministerial tenure.</p> <p>Senator Payne: I will take that question up. [page 181]</p>
10	Code of Conduct investigations - cost	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: How much has it cost to undertake these investigations?</p> <p>Mr Hudson: That is something I would not be able to approximate here, but I could take that on notice. [page 183]</p>
11	Code of Conduct investigations – correspondence and records	Cameron	<p>Senator CAMERON: What I am doing is making sure that Mr Hudson does not act beyond his responsibilities and actually treats this with a bit of fairness and decency. Fairness and decency are all I am asking and we will watch this very carefully, Mr Hudson. I want all correspondence in relation to this issue.</p> <p>Senator Payne: You would like to ask for that, Senator; is that what you are saying?</p> <p>Senator CAMERON: I would like all correspondence. I want all internal emails in relation to this, I want all correspondence between yourself and Mr Jackson and between Mr Jackson and the secretary. I also want any internal memos, any file notes and the dates of any phone calls in relation to this.</p> <p>Senator Payne: We will take that on notice. [pages 186-187]</p>