

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES - 20 OCTOBER 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Domestic Violence Exemptions

Question reference number: HS 23

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard page 115

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 December 2011

Number of pages: 2

Question:

a) **Senator SIEWERT:** There is a relatively low rate of applications for domestic violence exemptions, as I understand it. This is exemptions for their compulsory requirements for participation et cetera.

Mr Dunn: Between 1 July 2010 and 31 August 2011, we had 509 exemptions, but that was for domestic violence and for a classification of unusually high stress associated with a relationship breakdown.

Senator SIEWERT: Can you break it down beyond that to domestic violence?

Mr Dunn: No, we have some difficulty in being able to break it down any further.

Senator SIEWERT: You can get an exemption for various reasons. What is that as a proportion compared to the other exemptions that you can apply?

Ms Parkes: We would have to take that on notice, but it is a relatively low proportion, yes.

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b) **Senator SIEWERT:** Since these are relatively new changes to the laws, has there been some training or notification for social workers and people working with people who are likely to be vulnerable to domestic violence? Have you done some training or awareness raising around that? Have you looked at specific interventions—not that I like using that word—to look at how you can address that issue?

Ms Parkes: I am not aware of any specific training around domestic violence and awareness but I can take that on notice. We do have e-reference guidelines where we put the information for staff and we publicise those e-reference guidelines to staff.

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c) **Senator SIEWERT:** Have you seen an increase in the uptake of this—in other words, that people are now becoming aware that people can apply for this exemption?

Mr Dunn: I am not sure. I will just check to see if we have that. No, we would have to take that one on notice.

Answer:

The Department of Human Services provided a response to this Question on Notice on 9 December 2011. A recent refinement of data extraction has identified an error in the data originally provided. This revised data has been included below.

- a) A total of 508 'domestic violence/relationship breakdown' exemptions were granted during the period 1 July 2010 to 30 August 2011. These exemptions represented 0.09 per cent of the total 523,828 exemptions granted to job seekers during this period.
- b) Yes, a Domestic and Family Violence strategy, including the delivery of facilitated and/or self- paced training, has been introduced to raise staff awareness.
- c) The data captured does not indicate whether customers are more aware of the existence of a domestic violence/relationship breakdown exemption.