

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

Department of Human Services

Topic: Disability Support Pension – overseas payments

Question reference number: HS 18

Senator: Fifield

Type of question: Hansard page 104

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

Number of pages: 2

Question:

a) **Senator FIFIELD:** My question is: what has the change been to the number of payments going to people on the DSP overseas as a result of that change?

Ms Campbell: I will see whether Ms Golightly has got that statistic, but it is unlikely.

Senator FIFIELD: I guess they would not necessarily have been going to them overseas, because they might have come back periodically and received it here.

Ms Campbell: And often bank accounts are here and—

Senator FIFIELD: That is right, so it might not be a straightforward question to answer. But please try.

Ms Golightly: I am just getting the people with the detail on that, because, as you said, it is not as straightforward as it might look. I am getting that for you right now.

.....

b) **Senator FIFIELD:** Do Centrelink send cheques?

Ms Golightly: Not to my knowledge, but I will confirm that. I am pretty sure it is paid into the bank accounts.

.....

c) **Senator FIFIELD:** I would be interested in a month-by-month breakdown for the first six months of the last financial year of those people who were essentially domiciled overseas but claiming the DSP compared to the six months from January this year—to the end of the financial year—which is the period in which the new arrangements would be in place. I am thinking out aloud here as to the most meaningful way for you to provide this information to us. You tell me. There was a purpose to this change. What has been the effect of the change?

Ms Golightly: I do not have the monthly breakdown here but I can certainly get that for you.

Senator FIFIELD: You understand what I am seeking?

Ms Golightly: Yes, I do.

Senator FIFIELD: Can you give me something meaningful, month by month, which will demonstrate how things have changed in the first six months with the new legislative requirement from the last six months without that requirement?

Ms Golightly: Yes, we will get something for you.

Senator FIFIELD: I guess I am looking for the change in the individuals, the dollar value of those payments, the people who were living overseas et cetera. Some people will have made the decision to become effectively a resident of Australia to keep getting their DSP; others will have said, 'I prefer to stay where I am.' I appreciate that it is not a straightforward thing. My apologies for sounding as clear as mud.

Ms Golightly: It is a complex area.

Answer:

- a) As at 22 October 2011 there were 7,234 current Disability Support Pension customers who were recorded as residing outside Australia.
- b) As of 22 October 2011 there were 229 Disability Support Pension customers residing outside of Australia being paid by cheque.
- c) The table below provides a month-by-month breakdown for the 2010-11 financial year of Disability Support Pension customers who were residing outside Australia, current at the end of each month.

Month	Number
July 2010	7,744
August 2010	7,714
September 2010	7,677
October 2010	7,643
November 2010	7,610
December 2010	7,573
January 2011	7,525
February 2011	7,481
March 2011	7,448
April 2011	7,419
May 2011	7,408
June 2011	7,392

The ongoing residence requirement for Disability Support Pension customers was originally to take effect from 1 January 2011. However, the legislation was withdrawn in November 2010 and reintroduced in the Autumn 2011 sitting and was passed with a 1 July 2011 start date.

Due to the short window of time between the legislation passing and the start date, and in order to allow Disability Support Pension customers time to adjust to the change, a revised implementation strategy was signed off by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Human Services in May 2011.

As part of this revised implementation, a mail-out to customers selected for review was completed in September 2011. Residence reviews will formally commence from 1 January 2012.