

## Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

#### Department of Human Services

**Topic:** Newstart Exemptions

**Question reference number:** HS 19

**Senator:** Fifield

**Type of question:** Hansard page 105

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

**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

**Senator FIFIELD:** Do you have the number of people who have an exemption overall for a range of reasons?

**Ms Campbell:** I do not think we would have it here.

**Ms Parkes:** We could give you a breakdown of exemptions for people on Newstart. I will take that on notice.

**Senator FIFIELD:** General sorts of categories.

**Ms Campbell:** The general categories but not how many people in each category.

**Ms Parkes:** We could give you numbers in each category too, so we will take that on notice.

#### **Answer:**

As at 21 October 2011 there were 63,621 job seekers with exemptions. These are customers in receipt of Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance (jobseekers), Parenting Payment Partnered, Parenting Payment Single and Special Benefit with Activity Test or compulsory participation requirements. Breakdown by exemption category is as follows:

<b>Activity Exemptions</b>	<b>Total</b>
Customer Overseas	517
Armed Services Training Camp	50
Bereavement Period	183
Caring Responsibilities	2,068
Caring for a disabled child and not eligible for Carer Payment	1,115
Relative Carer (Non-Parent) with a State/Territory plan	25
Relative Carer (Non-Parent) with a Family Law Court Order	64
Community Service Order	63
Domestic Violence or Relationship breakdown in previous 26 weeks (Principal Carers only)	123

<b>Activity Exemptions</b>	<b>Total</b>
Special Benefit Temporary Visa Holder Carer Allowance/Payment Exemption	1
Special Benefit Temporary Visa Holder Dependent Child Exemption	6
Claiming Disability Support Pension	1,990
Principal Carer facilitating Distance Education for a child	185
Expectant Mother	2,489
Principal Carer Foster Carer	1,370
Temporarily Incapacitated	40,896
Jury Duty	15
Principal Carer Large Family (4 or more dependent children under 16)	3,331
Major personal crisis	4,352
Major personal disruption at home	181
Other Special Circumstances	977
Home Schooling	1,209
Refugee in first 6 months in Australia	7
Refugee in first 13 weeks in Australia	2,119
Special Family Circumstances	285
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,621</b>

Job seekers in receipt of Parenting Payment can continue to receive payment and be exempt from activity test requirements during any temporary absence from Australia for up to 13 weeks. This exemption can be granted for any reason.

Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance and Special Benefit can also continue to be paid for up to 13 weeks during a temporary overseas absence, but there are conditions for granting this exemption:

- dealing with acute family crisis, such as death or serious illness;
- attending legal proceedings (including custody cases) or adoption proceedings;
- receiving medical treatment of a kind which is not available in Australia; or
- attending an Australian Armed Forces Reserves training camp.