

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

Department of Human Services

Topic: Income Management

Question reference number: HS 21

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Hansard pages 109-112

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

Number of pages: 14

Question:

- a) **Senator SIEWERT:** On Bankstown and the other trial site, but, yes, I do have some specific ones around Bankstown. Moving to the roll out of the BasicsCard, I understand some advertising has been done to encourage local businesses to take up BasicsCard?

.....

Senator SIEWERT: Where did you put the ads?

Mr Tidswell: I'm not quite sure on that, but my assumption would be in the local media.

Senator SIEWERT: Would you take that on notice?

Mr Tidswell: Certainly.

Senator SIEWERT: And also the cost of the ads?

Mr Tidswell: Shall do.

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- b) **Senator SIEWERT:** Moving to receipts on BasicsCard printouts and dockets and the changes that have been made there, I understand that the Coles group is doing that. Is that correct?

Ms Cartwright: Correct.

.....

Senator SIEWERT: How many people have opted to use it?

Ms Cartwright: I might have to take that on notice.

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- c) **Ms Cartwright:** There are many other balance options, as you know. We have been through those on many occasions. In recent times we have introduced some self-service options for customers and we have also introduced a smartphone application for iPhones et cetera, which also has been quite popular.

Senator SIEWERT: Could you take on notice the matter of how many people have taken up the feature so far?

Ms Cartwright: Yes.

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- d) **Senator SIEWERT:** I want to go specifically to Bankstown. You have 26 merchants signed up in Bankstown. How many of those are the smaller merchants?

Ms Cartwright: I will take that one on notice to get you a breakdown of what specifically those 26 stores are.

.....

e) **Senator SIEWERT:** How long do people have to wait when they are phoning in.
Ms Ramsey: The wait times on the call centre are variable, depending upon what is happening. Also, I would point out that we have not yet commenced income management in Bankstown in terms of people being—

Senator SIEWERT: I know that, but generally?

Ms Ramsey: It is very variable. There can be long wait times. Equally, people can get straight through. I do not have wait times with me.

Senator SIEWERT: Can you take that on notice?

Ms Ramsey: Yes.

.....
 f) **Senator SIEWERT:** Do you have the figures for the cost of implementing the BasicsCard process?

Ms Campbell: Was your question in relation to the five trial sites, or more broadly?

Senator SIEWERT: Maybe I could have it for the NT and then for the five trial sites.

Ms Campbell: We might take that one on notice.

.....
 g) **Senator SIEWERT:** On several occasions we have had discussions about the letters that go out. Have you got the latest version of the letter that goes out now in the Northern Territory?

.....
Ms Ramsey: There is a range of letters and we have been reviewing them, as you are aware, and changing them.

Senator SIEWERT: That is why I have asked. It is because we have had that discussion previously and you are in the process of reviewing them.

Ms Ramsey: We are able to provide you with the new copies of the letters, but it is probably best if we take it away and make sure we line them up properly for you.

Answer:

a)

Place Based Local Government Area	Information Session Date	Radio Advertising (45 sec)	Newspaper Advertising	Total Costs (excl GST and admin charges)	Advertising Campaign Start and End Dates
Playford SA	29 September 2011	5AAA MIX 102.3 SA FM	Adelaide Advertiser Gawler Bunyip News Review Messenger	\$36,290.76	23/09/2011 - 29/09/2011
Shepparton VIC	6 October 2011	3SR FM 93.3 STAR96.9	Country News Shepparton Shepparton Advertiser Shepparton News Shepparton SN Weekly	\$18,597.36	26/09/2011 - 06/10/2011
Logan QLD	11 October 2011	97.3 FM 4MMM NOVA 106.9	Albert & Logan News Brisbane Courier Mail Jimboomba Times Logan West Leader	\$84,702.90	03/10/2011 - 11/10/2011
Rockhampton QLD	13 October 2011	4RO 990 FM HOT FM107.9 SEA FM101.5	Capricorn Coast Mirror Gladstone Observer Rockhampton & Fitzroy News Rockhampton & Fitzroy Bulletin	\$20,357.74	03/10/2011 - 13/10/2011
Bankstown NSW	20 October 2011	The EDGE 96.1FM 2DAY FM	Bankstown Torch Canterbury Bankstown Express Daily Telegraph Sydney Sunday Morning Herald	\$122,099.39	10/10/2011 - 20/10/2011
Total Advertising Costs for Radio and Print (including Service Charges, GST and Admin Fees etc)				\$282,048.15	

- b) As at 14 October 2011, 7,481 people have opted in for balance on receipt.
- c) This data will be available from January 2012.
- d) There are 8 supermarkets, 10 petrol stations, 7 department stores and 1 automotive repairs centre.
- e) Customers can contact Centrelink to obtain the balance of their BasicsCard through:
- i) the BasicsCard Balance Line (1800 057 111), which is an Interactive Voice Response service which has no waiting time for customers;
 - ii) the Income Management Line (13 2594), which has an average wait time year to date (as at 16 October 2011) of 290 seconds; and
 - iii) the Indigenous Service Line (13 6380), which has an average wait time year to date (as at 16 October of 2011) of 326 seconds.
- f) The funding the department has received to implement Income Management (which includes the BasicsCard) for 2011-12 is:
- Northern Territory - \$76.012 million; and
 - Place Based Income Management - \$8.845 million.
- g) The attached letters are sent to customers who will or are now subject to Income Management under New Income Management in the Northern Territory.
- Attachment one is sent to customers who become subject to Income Management under the Long Term Welfare Payment Measure. Customers who are subject to the Disengaged Youth Measure will receive a similar letter.
- Attachment two is sent to the customer after a Centrelink Social Worker has made a decision to income manage the customer under the Vulnerable Welfare Payment Measure.
- Attachment three is sent to customers to explain that due to the decision by the Social Worker they will be subject to Income Management under the Vulnerable Welfare Payment Measure
- Attachment four is sent to customers who are now subject to New Income Management and are requested to contact Centrelink

ATTACHMENT ONE

Lb 3 Regents Park Dc NSW 2143



CLKZLETTERA310065204001

Customer Reference Number:



Australian Government

Test
1 Nigel St
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0870



27 April 2012

Dear

Your payments are due to be Income managed under a compulsory measure

Your payment will now be subject to Income Management. We have assessed your current situation and have decided that you are a Long Term Welfare Payment Recipient Customer.

This decision is based on the length of time you have been in receipt of a payment.

What does this mean for you

Your payments will now be income managed. This means that 50 per cent of your fortnightly payments, and 100 per cent of any lump sum payments, advances or payments like the Baby Bonus, will be income managed. Income Management means that part of your payments will be managed by us to help you pay expenses like rent, food and other payments you and your family need. The rest will be paid to you.

What you need to do

You need to contact us within 28 days to discuss what expenses your income managed money will be used for. If you do not call us by 25 May 2012 your fortnightly payments will be automatically income managed.

We will talk to you about your circumstances and how Income Management works. If your payments become subject to income Management, you will need to provide documents that show the detail of your regular bills. For example, any documents that show what your ongoing expenses are for items such as:

- Rent
- Mortgage
- Power
- Telephone
- Food
- Hire purchase agreements
- School expenses such as School Meals Program

ATTACHMENT ONE

Are you eligible for an exemption

If you want to apply for an exemption from Income Management, you may be eligible if you meet one of these categories:

- Full Time Student
- Student Apprentice
- In regular paid employment
- Participating in an Approved Centrelink Activity
- Have dependent children who are attending school

A BasicsCard will also be offered to you once you commence Income Management. The BasicsCard is a reusable, PIN protected card that lets you spend your Income managed money at approved stores and businesses using the EFTPOS system.

This letter is a notice of decision. It is also, including the back of this letter, an information notice given under social security law.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please call the Income Management line on 13 2594*.

If you need an interpreter

If you need an interpreter, let us know in advance and we can arrange for one to be available.

Bringing someone else with you

If you wish, you can have another person with you such as a friend, relative, your nominee, adviser or someone else who might assist you.

What happens if you do not contact us

Your Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs payments may be stopped.

Information you should know

There is information on the back of this letter about your rights and how to comment on our service. If you have any questions or would like more information, please call the Income Management line on 13 2594*.

Yours sincerely

Manager
SALISBURY

Your reference number is

This is a request for information made under *Section 192 of the Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* allows the Secretary or a delegate to require any person to give information relevant to Centrelink customers receiving their correct entitlement. This is a notice requesting information under Division 1 of Part 5 of the *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* and given to you under s196 of that Act.

Penalties can apply for failing to provide information or for deliberate giving of false or misleading information.

Your rights

If you do not agree with a decision Centrelink has made:

- Contact us so we can explain the decision and change it if appropriate (this step is optional).
- Contact us and ask for an independent Authorised Review Officer to look at your case.
- Go to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal if you disagree with the Authorised Review Officer's decision.
- Go to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal if you disagree with the Social Security Appeals Tribunal's decision.

All of the above are free of charge.

Important: If you wish to appeal a decision, contact Centrelink as soon as possible. If you do not ask for a review as soon as possible, you may not receive your full entitlement if the decision is changed.

There is no time limit for a review about money you owe Centrelink, but you may have to pay back the money while the decision is being reconsidered.

Your right to privacy

Your personal information is protected by law and can only be released to someone else in special circumstances, where Commonwealth legislation authorises or requires, or where you give your permission. The law does, however, allow Centrelink to check the information you provide with other organisations to ensure that you are being paid correctly. If you have concerns about your personal information, you can:

- Call us or come in and see us and ask to speak to a Privacy Officer. We can tell you about your rights if you wish to see and amend your information under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.
- Get more information by going online at www.centrelink.gov.au and accessing our factsheet entitled 'Your Right to Privacy'. You can also request a copy by calling us or visiting your nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre.

To comment on our service

- Call Customer Relations on 1800 050 004* or the TTY phone on 1800 000 567* if you have a hearing or speech difficulty.
- Call the Commonwealth Ombudsman 1300 362 072*



Contact Information

13 2594 or **13 1202** for all other enquiries
Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

Please note customer telephone number 13 2594
Call charges apply for 13 numbers and may vary by
location

13 2594 for all other enquiries
Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

13 1202 for all other enquiries
Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

www.centrelink.gov.au

ATTACHMENT TWO

Lb 3 Regents Park Dc NSW 2143



CLKLETTERB137472378001

Customer Reference Number:



Australian Government

Inm Test
1 Skg788 St
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0872



19 October 2011



Dear

You have been assessed as a Vulnerable Welfare Payment Recipient.

On 19 October 2011 an assessment of your circumstances was undertaken by Test lid, a Centrelink Social Worker. Concerns were raised about your well-being placed at risk due to on-going financial hardship.

Although different money management options were discussed with you, a decision has been made to assess you as a Vulnerable Welfare Payment Recipient.

This means you may receive a letter from Centrelink, requesting you contact regarding Income Management.

If you think your situation has changed and you would like your Vulnerable assessment reconsidered, you are able to contact Test lid to have a reassessment of your circumstances. If a decision is made to continue your Vulnerable status, you will need to wait 90 days before you can request another reconsideration.
If you have any questions you can contact Test lid on

Information you should know

There is information on the back of this letter about your rights and how to comment on our service.

This letter is a notice of decision. It is also including the back of this letter, an information notice given under social security law. If you have any questions or would like more information, please call the Income Management line on 13 2594.*

Yours sincerely

Manager
BUNDABERG Centrelink

Your reference number is

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Your rights

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Your right to privacy


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- Call us or come in and see us and ask to speak to a Privacy Officer. We can tell you about your rights if you wish to see and amend your information under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- Get more information by going online at www.centrelink.gov.au and accessing our factsheet entitled "Your Right to Privacy". You can also request a copy by calling us or visiting your nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre.

To comment on our service

- Call Customer Relations on 1800 050 004* or the TTY phone on 1800 000 567* if you have a hearing or speech difficulty.
- Call the Commonwealth Ombudsman 1300 362 072*

Contact information


 13 2594

 13 1202 in languages other than English

Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm


Please quote customer reference number to 188 82 11

*Call charges apply for 13 numbers and may apply for 1800 numbers

 **Your local Centrelink Customer Service Centre**

26 Wollongarra Street
Bundaberg QLD 4670

Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm

 www.centrelink.gov.au

ATTACHMENT THREE

Lb 3 Regents Park Dc NSW 2143



CLK2LETTERB309139879001

Customer Reference Number:



Test
562 Lot Rd
GUNN POINT NT 0822

30 April 2012



Dear



Australian Government



Your payments are due to be income managed under a compulsory measure

Your payment will now be subject to Income Management. We have assessed your current situation and have decided that you are a Vulnerable Welfare Payment Recipient Customer.

This decision is based on a recent assessment of your circumstances by a Social Worker.

What does this mean for you

Your payments will now be income managed. This means that 50 per cent of your fortnightly payments, and 100 per cent of any lump sum payments, advances or payments like the Baby Bonus, will be income managed. Income Management means that part of your payments will be managed by us to help you pay expenses like rent, food and other payments you and your family need. The rest will be paid to you.

What you need to do

You need to contact us within 56 days to discuss what expenses your income managed money will be used for. If you do not call us by 25 June 2012 your fortnightly payments will be automatically income managed.

We will talk to you about your circumstances and how Income Management works. If your payments become subject to Income Management, you will need to provide documents that show the detail of your regular bills. For example, any documents that show what your ongoing expenses are for items such as:

- Rent
- Mortgage
- Power
- Telephone
- Food
- Hire purchase agreements
- School expenses such as School Meals Program

This letter is a notice of decision. It is also, including the back of this letter, an information notice given under social security law.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please call the Income Management line on 13 2584*.

ATTACHMENT THREE

If you need an interpreter

If you need an interpreter, let us know in advance and we can arrange for one to be available.

Bringing someone else with you

If you wish, you can have another person with you such as a friend, relative, your nominee, adviser or someone else who might assist you.

What happens if you do not contact us

Your Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs payments may be stopped.

Information you should know

There is information on the back of this letter about your rights and how to comment on our service. If you have any questions or would like more information, please call the Income Management line on 13 2584*.

Yours sincerely

Manager
INCOME MANAGEMENT

Your reference number is

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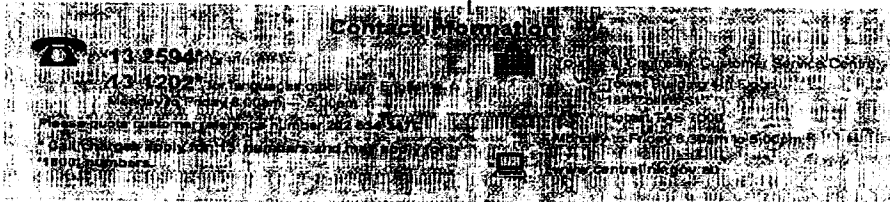
Your right to privacy

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- Call the Commonwealth Ombudsman 1300 362 072*



Lb 3 Regents Park Dc NSW 2143



CLX2LETTERA310065204001

Customer Reference Number



Australian Government



27 April 2012



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- Rent
- Mortgage
- Power
- Telephone
- Food
- Hire purchase agreements
- School expenses such as School Meals Program

Do Not Post

Test Run

ATTACHMENT FOUR

Are you eligible for an exemption

If you want to apply for an exemption from Income Management, you may be eligible if you meet one of these categories:

- Full Time Student
- Student Apprentice
- In regular paid employment
- Participating in an Approved Centrelink Activity
- Have dependent children who are attending school

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If you have any questions or would like more information, please call the Income Management line on 13 2284.

If you need an interpreter

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What happens if you do not contact us

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Information you should know

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Yours sincerely

Manager
SALISBURY

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- Call the Commonwealth Ombudsman 1300 362 072*

DO NOT RUN TEST

Contact information



13 2584* or
13 1202* for languages other than English
Monday to Friday 8.00am — 5.00pm

Please quote customer reference number 582 522 0788

* Call charges apply for '13' numbers and may apply for '1800' numbers.



Your local Centrelink Customer Service Centre:
32—38 Gawler St
Salisbury SA 5108

Monday to Friday 8.00am — 5.00pm



www.centrelink.gov.au