

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 18 OCTOBER 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Flood and disaster payments - complaints

Question reference number: HS 22

Senator: McKenzie

Type of question: Hansard pages 109-110

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 December 2012

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator McKENZIE: I am going to ask questions about floods and disaster payments. In regards to Commonwealth disaster assistance—and I am asking these questions on behalf of Senator Humphries—and the Australian government disaster recovery payments, did Centrelink receive any complaints from either the states and territories or the general public during the 2012 January to March disaster season?

Mr Tidswell: I am not aware of any specific complaints from state governments or from individuals directly. Most people are grateful for the assistance that they receive. The flood events of this year were quite tricky to deal with, because there was a slow build up through a large part of south-eastern Australia, Queensland and other places. In that sense, people were genuinely appreciative. We had processed about 158,000 claims as at 5 October 2012. In total, about \$66.7 million has been paid out into people's bank accounts as a result of the work that we have done.

Senator McKENZIE: So with all the people who have been assisted through this program you have not received any complaints about how—

Mr Tidswell: I am not aware of any specific ones. But I can take that on notice to see if we have received any complaints.

Senator McKENZIE: Thank you. They might not have rung you directly.

Mr Tidswell: No. They have not come back to me in terms of volume and numbers. We had people out there. There may well have been complaints when we were doing this work.

Senator McKENZIE: If you could take that on notice and check, that would be great.

Answer:

From January to March 2012, the Department recorded 28 complaints from members of the public regarding Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payments and ex-gratia payments.

The Department received no formal complaints originating from the state or territory jurisdictions relating to the delivery of Disaster Recovery Payments during this period.