

## Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 18 OCTOBER 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Human Services Portfolio

**Topic:** Income Management – vulnerability indicator data

**Question reference number:** HS 27

**Senator:** Siewert

**Type of question:** Hansard pages 114-115

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

**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

Senator SIEWERT: ..... This morning when we were talking to FaHCSIA around the place based trials, which was at the end-of-the-month figures—three of which were not voluntary and were listed as vulnerable—they said to ask you under what vulnerability indicator they came.

Mr Sandison: I think the issue there is that, when social workers make the consideration and there are those criteria, we do not collect the data about which criteria they might use because it would be a number of them in the mix. That is normally held in the social worker records, some under privacy issues. That is text information rather than data. We just identify that they have been given a consideration and the vulnerability indicator has been used, but not which of the elements below.

Senator SIEWERT: Surely that is really useful data. You obviously keep the records on child protection?

Mr Sandison: Yes. We do not actually split it as data. One of the issues might be looking at the records. It is that we do not have numbers that say which ones fell under which of those four criteria, just now, because it is not a statistic in the system. You can go to the individual records and find out the nature of the decisions being made by the social workers.

Senator SIEWERT: If we are trying to analyse the effectiveness against vulnerability indicators, how are we going to make that assessment?

Mr Tidswell: Senator, I think that is a question for FaHCSIA in terms of the evaluation of the program.

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Senator SIEWERT: So, FaHCSIA have it, is that what you are saying?

Mr Sandison: No, we hold the information. We will talk to them in terms of what Mr Tidswell said about the evaluation and looking at an assessment of which of the criteria were being used. We can take that on notice and discuss it with them for a response.

Senator SIEWERT: That would be appreciated. Thank you.

**Answer:**

Social Workers are able to determine that a person is vulnerable under four criteria:

- financial hardship;
- financial exploitation;
- failure to undertake reasonable self-care; and
- homelessness or risk of homelessness.

As at 18 October 2012, all people determined to be a vulnerable welfare payment recipient in Place Based trial sites were determined to be vulnerable using three of the criteria. The reasons are:

- financial hardship;
- failure to undertake reasonable self-care; and
- homelessness or risk of homelessness.