

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND**  
**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO**  
**2012-13 Supplementary Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number:** 3

**Question No:** 34

**Topic:** Special Benefit

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Cash** asked:

With regard to Special Benefit:

- a. How many people received this payment in 2010-11 and 2011-12? Can you provide a breakdown by adjusted taxable income where possible, and whether these were short or long-term recipients?
- b. How many of these recipients received the maximum rate of payment?
- c. How many persons in receipt of this payment are holders of a temporary visa?
- d. How many persons in receipt of this payment are newly arrived migrants (complying with the 104 weeks eligibility requirement)?
- e. How many people have received this payment while taking a temporary absence of between 6 and 13 weeks from Australia?
- f. How many recipients also receive the Pensioner Education Supplement?
- g. How many recipients also received the Education Entry payment?
- h. There is a substantial increase in the appropriation for this payment over the forward estimates from \$89,804m in 13-14 to \$102,434m in 15-16 - what are the factors that account for or contribute to this projected increase? (page 72 FaHCSIA PBS 2012-13)
- i. Can you provide a breakdown of how the Household Assistance Package will impact upon the Special Benefit payment over the forward estimates?
- j. What is the average duration of this payment?

**Answer:**

a. At June 2011, there were 6,385 Special Benefit recipients. Information on adjusted taxable income is not available but there were 117 recipients with earnings at June 2011. There were 875 short term (in receipt of Special Benefit for less than three months) and 5,510 long term (in receipt of Special Benefit for greater than three months) Special Benefit recipients.

At June 2012, there were 5,828 Special Benefit recipients. 84 recipients had earnings at June 2012. There were 546 short term and 5,282 long term recipients.

b. At June 2011, there were 1,698 Special Benefit recipients receiving the maximum rate of Special Benefit. At June 2012, there were 1,369 Special Benefit recipients receiving the maximum rate of Special Benefit.

c. At June 2011, there were 1,881 Special Benefit recipients who were holders of a temporary visa. At June 2012, there were 1,143 Special Benefit recipients who were holders of a temporary visa.

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d. At June 2011, there were 229 Special Benefit recipients who were newly arrived migrants in a waiting period. At June 2012, there were 206 Special Benefit recipients who were newly arrived migrants in a waiting period.

e. The Department of Human Services has advised that in 2010-11 and 2011-12 there were no Special Benefit recipients receiving the payment while taking a temporary absence of between 6 and 13 weeks from Australia.

f. The Pensioner Education Supplement is the responsibility of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Pensioner Education Supplement is only available to sole parent Special Benefit recipients who have a dependent child under 16 years.

g. The Education Entry Payment is the responsibility of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Education Entry Payment is only available to Special Benefit recipients who are ineligible for Parenting Payment Single because of their residency status.

h. The increase in the Special Benefit appropriation expenses across the forward years reflects projected changes in customer trends and indexation parameters.

i. The table below provides a breakdown of the impact of the Household Assistance Package on the Special Benefit forward estimates.

2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
\$1.080m	\$0.427m	\$0.953m	\$0.984m	\$1.015m

j. At June 2012 the average duration on Special Benefit was 2.4 years.