

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 21 NOVEMBER 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Fraud and Compliance – Public Tip-offs

Question reference number: HS 50

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 24 January 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

For the year 2012-13:

- a) How many tip-offs were made to the Centrelink fraud line?
- b) How many tip offs led to payment reductions?
- c) What savings arose from this program?
- d) How many tip-offs resulted in no payment reductions?
- e) How many tip offs related to alleged “member of a couple” matters?
- f) How many cases investigated resulted in no change in rates of payment?
- g) Does Centrelink keep a record of what could be termed “vexatious dob-ins”? If not, why not?
- h) How many staff were involved in this activity?
- i) What was the cost of running this program?
- j) What was the cost to the taxpayer of investigating tip-offs that proved to be without merit or vexatious?

Answer:

- a) There were 50,494 tip-offs made to the Centrelink fraud line in 2012-13. Refer to the Department of Human Services 2012-13 Annual Report’s section on ‘Public tip-offs’ for more information.
- b) The department is unable to disaggregate those payment reductions which resulted from tip-offs to the Centrelink fraud line, as distinct from those that resulted from other tip-off sources.
- c) The department is unable to disaggregate savings that resulted from tip-offs to the Centrelink fraud line, as distinct from savings that resulted from other tip-off sources.

- d) In regard to tip-offs which resulted in no payment reduction, the department is unable to disaggregate those which relate to the tip-offs to the Centrelink fraud line and those which relate to other tip-off sources.
- e) In regard to tip-offs related to alleged “member of a couple” matters, the department is unable to disaggregate those which relate to the tip-offs to the Centrelink fraud line and those which relate to other tip-off sources.
- f) In regard to tip-offs which resulted in no change in rate of payment, the department is unable to disaggregate those which relate to the tip-offs to the Centrelink fraud line and those which relate to other tip-off sources.
- g) The department does not classify “vexatious dob-ins” separately from other information received from members of the public.
- h) The department is unable to disaggregate the number of staff working on the fraud tip-off line from those working on other tip-off cases.
- i) The department is unable to disaggregate the cost of running the fraud tip-off line from other tip-off costs.
- j) The department does not classify “vexatious dob-ins” separately from other information received from members of the public.