

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 21 NOVEMBER 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Centrelink overpayments

Question reference number: HS 90

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) How many people have a Centrelink overpayment (including FTBA and B) and are not currently in receipt of a Centrelink payment (including FTBA and B)? (List Centrelink payments and FTBA and B overpayments separately).
- b) What was the total value of these outstanding debts?
- c) How much of this overpayment (in total value and numbers of debtors) is currently not under a recovery arrangement?
- d) What steps are being taken to recover these overpayments?

Answer:

As at 30 September 2013:

- a) The department's debt management information system does not separately identify FTB A and B debts.
There were 427,276 debts owed by non-current customers (people not in receipt of a Centrelink payment at that date). Of this total, 153,644 debts relate to Family Tax Benefit and associated payments.
The department does not report the number of customers with debts, rather the number of debts (as one customer may have more than one debt).
Family Tax Benefit debts include debts identified through the FTB reconciliation process and a number of associated payments, including Schoolkids Bonus, Rent Assistance, Large Family Supplement, Clean Energy Supplement, Multiple Birth Allowance.
- b) The total value of the debts owed by non-current customers was \$1,062,654,963. Of this total, debts to the value of \$463,575,307 are owed in relation to Family Tax Benefit and associated payments.
- c) Of the total debts owed by non-current customers 174,401 debts, with a total value of \$443,370,372, were not under any formal recovery arrangement.

- d) Where debts are not under any recovery arrangement, the department attempts to discuss repayment arrangements with these customers. If several attempts to contact the customer are unsuccessful, other avenues to pursue recovery may be considered, such as referral to a Collection Agent, or garnishee of wages or tax refund.