

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 21 NOVEMBER 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: 2012-13 waived overpayments

Question reference number: HS 91

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

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Question:

In relation to Centrelink overpayments waived under section 12377AAD of the Social Security Act ('special circumstances') in the 2012-13 financial year:

- a) What was the total value of debts waived and the number of individuals whose debts were waived?
- b) What was the average level of debt waived?

Answer:

'Special circumstance' legislation is a discretionary provision, and each case is considered on its own merits. The net effect of all of the customer's circumstances is taken into account. Generally the situations must be unusual, uncommon or exceptional and there must be a particular quality that would describe it as special and different from the usual run of cases.

In 2012-13:

- a) There were 5,947 debts with a total value of \$11,495,225 waived on the basis of extreme and unusual circumstances.
- b) The average value of debts waived on the basis of extreme and unusual circumstances was \$1,933.

Please note: The department does not report the number of customers with debts, but rather the number of debts as one customer may have more than one debt.