

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

**SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 23-24 OCTOBER 2014
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Department of Human Services

Topic: Social Work Services

Question reference number: HS 35

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

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Question:

In 2013-14:

- a) How many social work appointments were delivered face-to-face and via Centrelink offices?
- b) Provide a list of the range of issues dealt with by social workers.
- c) Provide a breakdown of contact type as provided in the Social Work Information System.
- d) How many home visits were made?
- e) How many referrals were made from the Centrelink Call Centres?
- f) How many compliance/debt interviews were completed?
- g) How many social workers are currently working in Centrelink? How does this compare for the last three financial years?
- h) Provide a list of Centrelink offices which do not have a social worker employed at the office.
- i) What access to Social Workers has been available to clients in rural and remote over the past 12 months?

Answer:

- a) In 2013-14, the number of social work appointments delivered face-to-face via Department of Human Services offices was 77,557.
- b) Social workers are at the intensive end of the department's service delivery, with priority given to customers presenting at risk of suicide or mental distress, young people without adequate support, customers experiencing domestic and family violence, mental illness, homelessness and hardship. Social workers also undertake a range of assessments to support the determination of eligibility for income support payments including Unreasonable to Live At Home and Crisis Payment claims, exemptions from seeking child support, comprehensive compliance assessments and income management assessments.

A list of the range of issues dealt with by social workers is outlined below:

Accommodation and/or Homelessness Issues
Bereavement/Grief and Loss
Caring Issues
Child Protection Issues
Child Support Issues
Couple Relationship Issues
Customer Aggression
Customer Distress
Domestic and Family Violence
Debt Issues
Difficulties with Independent Living
Disaster/Emergency Response
Disputed Contact/Shared Care Issues
Education Issues
Failure to Undertake Reasonable Self-care
Financial Exploitation
Financial/Hardship Issues
Gambling Issues
Group/Community Violence
Health Issues
Income Management
Issues Following Separation
Mental Health Issues
Nominee Arrangements
Centrelink Payment Issues
Parent/Child Issues
Participation/Job Seeker Issues
Personal and/or Family Issues
Risk of Suicide
Rural/Drought
School Attendance and Enrolment Measure
Sexual Abuse
Sexuality Issues
Substance Misuse

- c) Breakdown of social work contact type as provided in the Social Work Information System in 2013-14:

Contact type	2013-14
Case Discussion	143,377
Correspondence	38,044
File/Paper Assessment	133,803
Home Visit	392
Interview Elsewhere	2,553
Interview in Service Centre - Face to Face	77,557
On-Line	2,160
Phone Call	97,735
Phone Interview	237,241
Rural/Remote Visit	1,279
SEAM - Family Conference	545
Total	734,686

- d) Social workers made 392 home visits in 2013-14.
- e) Social workers received 30,251 referrals from Centrelink call queues in 2013-14.
- f) Social workers received 2,896 referrals for debt issues in 2013-14. Social workers undertook 35,484 Comprehensive Compliance Assessments in 2013-14.
- g) The table below provides an overview of social work staffing levels:

Year	Actual Staffing Level (ASL)	ASL/Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)
2010-11	783	650 ASL
2011-12	729	630 ASL
2012-13	690	615 FTE
2013-14	685	606.99 FTE

h) The following service centres do not have a physical social work presence:

Queensland	NSW	Victoria	Western Australia
South Brisbane	Auburn	Warragul	Armadale
Cherbourg	Bourke	Wonthaggi	Busselton
Margate*	Baulkham Hills	Pakenham	Esperance
MyGov Brisbane*	Glenn Innes	Rowville	Kalgoorlie ~
Atherton	Gunnedah	Belgrave	Karratha
Ayr	Hawkesbury	Mornington	Laverton RASC
Biloela	Inverell	Hastings	Meekatharra RCS
Bowen	Lightening Ridge	Airport West	Newman RASC
Charters Towers	Lithgow	Sunbury	Northam
Emerald	Moree	Sth Melbourne	Warwick Grove
Grafton St, Cairns	Mudgee	Seymour	Northern Territory
Ingham	Narrabri	Yarra	Tennant Creek
Innisfail	Orange	Echuca	Nhulunbuy
Longreach	Springwood	Deniliquin	Kununurra
Mareeba	St Marys	Ararat	Derby
Mossman	Walgett	Stawell	ACT
Mt. Isa	Bryon Bay	Portland	Woden
Normanton	Nambucca Heads	Corio	Gungahlin
Palm Island	Yass	Colac	
Thursday Island	Leeton	Swan Hill	
Whitsunday	Cooma	Newport	
Willows, Townsville	Narooma	South Australia	
Yarrabah	Corrimal	Kadina	
Yeppoon	Dapto	Pt Pirie	
Southport	Warrawong	Pt Lincoln	
Robina	Bondi Junction	Ceduna	
Beauesert	Caringbah	Cooper Pedy	
Cleveland	Cabramatta	Glenelg	
Capalaba	Ingleburn		
Wynnum	Camden		
Warwick			
Dalby			
Charleville			
Goondiwindi			
Stanthorpe			

* Digital Service Centres

~ Kalgoorlie Social Work position is an advertised vacancy

i) Social workers are positioned in a range of service delivery channels to ensure that all customers are able to access social work services. Customers in rural and remote parts of Australia have been able to access face to face social workers in some locations as part of the department's remote servicing arrangements. All customers have had access to a national phone based social work service.