

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

Department of Human Services

Topic: Centrelink Overpayments among Former Payment Recipients

Question reference number: HS 178

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12 December 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) How many people have a Centrelink overpayment (including FTB Part A and Part B) and are not currently in receipt of a Centrelink payment (including FTB Part A and Part B)? (List Centrelink payments and FTB Part A and Part 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 2014:

- a) The department's debt management information system does not separately identify Family Tax Benefit Part A and Part B debts.
There were 306,433 non-current customers with a total of 478,622 debts. Of this total, there were 103,205 non-current customers with a total of 177,829 debts relating to Family Tax Benefit.
Family Tax Benefit debts also includes debts identified through the FTB reconciliation process.
- b) The total value of the debts owed by non-current customers was \$1,151,320,803. Of this total, debts to the value of \$497,259,786 are owed in relation to Family Tax Benefit.
- c) Of the total debts owed by non-current customers 211,243 debts, with a total value of \$535,549,788, were not under any formal arrangement. Of this, there were 87,454 Family Tax Benefit debts for non-current customers with a total value of \$276,165,582 that were not under a 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.