

## Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 22 OCTOBER 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Department of Human Services

**Topic:** Centrepay – QoN S2119

**Question reference number:** HS 27

**Senator:** Cameron

**Type of question:** Hansard page 130

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 11 December 2015

**Number of pages:** 1

#### **Question:**

Senator CAMERON: Minister, can you explain the discrepancy between the answer to question on notice 2119 and the advice received by the Minister in executive minute B14821?

Senator Payne: I will take that on notice. No, I cannot right now, because I do not have those materials in front of me.

#### **Answer:**

Senate Question on Notice 2119 of 8 April 2015 asked the Minister for Human Services about Centrepay organisations whose business is the provision of consumer leases of household goods. The answer, tabled on 15 May 2015, indicated it was not possible to provide a list of such organisations, noting the contracts between the Department of Human Services and Centrepay-approved businesses did not require the businesses to inform the Department as to whether particular goods are provided through consumer leases or by other types of contract.

Advice provided to the Minister in Executive Minute B14/821 of 17 September 2014 had included a sentence purporting to give the number of ‘consumer lease providers’ in Centrepay. The number given was in fact the number of businesses then approved to receive Centrepay deductions for household goods and services. Not all of these businesses were necessarily engaged in provision of consumer leases; some were engaged in sale or maintenance of household goods, and not provision of consumer leases.

The discrepancy arose because Executive Minute B14/821 had reflected the Department’s understanding at the time it was prepared, but the later answer to Senate Question on Notice 2119 reflected the Department’s further assessment of the situation of businesses approved for Centrepay’s household goods service reason.

Subsequently, through assurance activity in conjunction with transition to the new Centrepay Policy and Terms, the Department has obtained information about usage of consumer leases by businesses approved to use Centrepay’s household goods service reason.