

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2015-16 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 1.9 Income Support for Carers

Question No: SQ15-000951

Topic: Grandparent carers

Hansard page: 58

Senator Dean Smith asked:

What increase has there been in the number of grandparent carers in receipt of formal payments over the last five years? What work has the department done in calculating what might be the future increase in those numbers over the next five years?

Answer:

The Department of Human Services (DHS) collects data on the number of Family Tax Benefit (FTB) customers per entitlement year. Prior to June 2011, the customer-child relationship was not available as a data item, and therefore grandparents caring for children could not be identified in this data. However, since that time, the number of FTB families who self-identify the nature of the relationship between child and carer as 'grandparent' has become available.

Data held by DHS shows that the number of FTB families with carers who identify as grandparent carers has increased from around 16,000 in the 2011-12 entitlement year to around 20,000 in the 2013-14 entitlement year*. The Department notes that the observed increase may be due to more customers choosing to self-report as grandparent carers over time, and therefore may not be a reflection of an actual population increase.

Available DHS data shows that the grandparent carer population comprises around one per cent of the total FTB population. No specific modelling of changes in the number of grandparent carers over time is included in the overall analysis for estimating the future FTB population.

**Note: This is the most recent full-year data available and includes all grandparent carers who had eligibility for FTB at any point in the year - even for a single day. Families have up to one year after the end of an entitlement year to claim FTB. Final eligibility is not determined until they have lodged a tax return or informed the Department of Human Services that they are not required to lodge. As the lodgement of FTB claims for the 2014-15 entitlement year continues, data from the 2014-15 entitlement year is not complete at this point in time.*