



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Senator Zed Seselja
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator

Correction of evidence to 2015-16 Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing on 21-22 October 2015.

I am writing to clarify an answer provided to the Committee during its examination of the Department of Social Security in relation to Outcome 1.

In answering a question from Senator Moore regarding special benefit, I said:

“And 605,000 recipients of special benefit at the at-home rate for under 18. So these are all people under the age of 18”. (Page 26, 22 October 2015 - attached)

This is a misstatement. The recipient number is incorrect and was actually **605**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Andrew Whitecross'.

Andrew Whitecross
Branch Manager
Rates and Means Testing Policy

11/11/2015

Ms Halbert: Senator, would you mind if we came back to that question? As I said, the figures we have got do not split it up. We will have to go back to the department to get that split for you.

Senator MOORE: Sure. How long will that take, Ms Halbert?

Ms Halbert: I am just following up.

Senator MOORE: I understand. If we can get those answers this morning, that would be really good.

Ms Halbert: Sure.

Senator MOORE: We have other ones to go to. We will keep going through the questions and see which can be answered now and which you need to get more support for. I will read through mine and Senator Siewert can read through hers in case the same advice has to happen. How many FTBA families will benefit from the \$10 per fortnight increase to FTBA proposed in the legislation introduced yesterday?

Mr Whitecross: One point two million families will benefit from the increase in FTBA.

Senator MOORE: One point two?

Mr Whitecross: Million families for 2.2 million children.

Senator MOORE: For 2.2 million children.

Mr Whitecross: And the loss of the 22,200 young people receiving youth rates of income support will also benefit.

Senator MOORE: That is that other group that has now been made eligible.

Mr Whitecross: Yes.

Senator MOORE: Will the increase go to every family in receipt of FTBA?

Mr Whitecross: No.

Senator MOORE: So the youth allowance recipients under 18 who live at home will also get the increase. Is that the figure of 23,000 that you gave?

Mr Whitecross: The 22,200 is the combined number for youth allowance.

Senator MOORE: And DSP?

Mr Whitecross: Youth rates of disability support pension, Abstudy and special benefit.

Senator MOORE: Can we get that refined into each of those subcategories?

Mr Whitecross: Yes. So 15,600 youth allowance at home under 18.

Senator MOORE: Yes.

Mr Whitecross: And 4,930 disability support pension.

Senator MOORE: DSP, yes.

Mr Whitecross: And 1,050 Abstudy at home or in state or foster care.

Senator MOORE: Yes.

Mr Whitecross: And 605,000 recipients of special benefit at the at-home rate for under 18. So these are all people under the age of 18.

Senator MOORE: Right. Thank you for that. My questions were looking at the different categories that fell under that number. So, with those people, how many of them live in families that do not receive FTB and, as such, will not be affected by the cut?

Mr Whitecross: I am sorry, but I cannot answer that question. They will not receive FTB in relation to this child because they are receiving income support for this child. But I could not tell you whether they were receiving FTB for another child in the household. But in relation to—

Senator MOORE: That child?

Mr Whitecross: In relation to this child, they cannot attract FTBA or FTBB. But if they have got another child in the family, they could be attracting that in relation to that other child.

CHAIR: Senator Moore, I am not at all going to cut you off, but I am going to try and go back and forth a little bit during this period.

Senator MOORE: Absolutely.

CHAIR: It has been almost 20 minutes. I will give you a couple more minutes because I know you are pursuing a particular line.