

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015

Outcome 1 - Employment

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000049

Senator Siewert provided in writing.

Relates to previous Department of Employment Question No EW0149_14.

Question

Activity Test Exemptions for domestic violence

"1. I refer to QON Budget Estimates 2013-2014, Employment, DEEW Question No. EW0149_14. The table provided an update of Parenting Payment recipients with activity test exemptions. Please provide an update of these exemptions.

2. Please provide a breakdown of the exemption grouped together under personal circumstances. It notes that 166 of those on Parenting Payment Single have exemptions around sorry business, homelessness, witness protection, Indigenous cultural business or domestic violence. It further notes that less than 20 women on either the Parenting Payment Partnered or Parenting Partnered Single - were accessing domestic violence exemption that were available for Principal Carer Parents.

3. Please provide a breakdown of the past decade into the granting of these DV exemptions, and whether take-up increased at a result of measures that took effect after the 2010 Participation Taskforce. "

Answer

1. Of the previously grandfathered Parenting Payment Partnered (PPP) and Parenting Payment Single (PPS) recipients who transitioned to Newstart Allowance on 1 January 2013, there were 3,632 job seekers still on Newstart Allowance as at 27 February 2015 with current exemptions (843 formerly PPP and 2,789 formerly PPS). Table 1 below provides a breakdown of those job seekers by exemption category (noting the numbers include recipients whose youngest child turned 16 between 1 January 2013 and 27 February 2015 and therefore would have been transferred to Newstart Allowance from that date, regardless of the removal of the grandfathered measure).

2. As at 27 February 2015, there were <20 former PPP recipients and <20 former PPS recipients who were accessing the domestic violence exemption for Principal Carer Parents, and <20 former PPP recipients and 90 former PPS recipients with a current exemption for 'major personal crisis' (includes exemptions granted for homelessness, witness protection, domestic violence for non-Principal Carer Parents, indigenous job seeker undertaking cultural or sorry business - no further breakdown is available).

3. Table 2 below provides annual time series data on the number of Principal Carer Parents on Activity Tested Income Support Payments (Newstart Allowance, PPS, PPP or Youth Allowance (Other)) with a current exemption type of 'domestic violence', 'major personal crisis' or 'relationship breakdown'. Numbers of Principal Carer Parents with these exemption types appear to have increased moderately since end June 2008 (earliest available data). While it is not possible to attribute these increases to any particular factor/(s), they are broadly in line with rate of growth in the Activity Tested job seeker population.

Table 1

Exemption Category	Number of Newstart Allowance Job Seekers with an Exemption	
	Formerly Parenting Payment Partnered	Formerly Parenting Payment Single
Temporary incapacity		
Temporary incapacity due to illness, injury or disability	254	1403
Incapacity due to serious illness requiring long recovery periods, e.g. cancer, severe stroke, brain injuries, physical injuries.	<20	52
Caring responsibility		
Principal Carer Parent of a large family - four or more children	265	269
Principal Carer Parent providing home schooling, includes main supporter of one or more secondary school children	143	315
Principal Carer Parent registered and active foster carer and non Principal Carer Parent emergency and respite foster carer	68	292
Carer Parent caring for a child with high needs, however, carer not eligible for Carer Payment	24	74
Caring Responsibilities temporarily caring for an adult or child/ren	<20	83
Principal Carer Parent providing facilitating distance education, includes main supporter of one or more secondary school children	21	44
Principal Carer caring for a child related to them where they are not a parent – through a Family Law Court Order	<20	24
Principal Carer Parent - Special Family Circumstances eg providing kinship or family care, care for aged or disabled adult family member or has a 6 year old child not yet started school	<20	<20
Carer caring for a child related to them where they are not a parent – through a State or Territory	<20	<20
Caring Responsibilities Exemption for Temporary Visa Holders with Dependent Child under 6	<20	<20
Personal circumstances		
Major personal crisis, e.g. homelessness, witness protection, domestic violence for non-Principal Carer Parents, indigenous job seeker undertaking cultural or sorry business	<20	90
Claiming Disability Support Pension*	<20	47
Expectant mother within 6 weeks of expected due date of giving birth and 6 weeks after giving birth	<20	31
Other special circumstances – case by case	<20	28

Exemption Category	Number of Newstart Allowance Job Seekers with an Exemption	
	Formerly Parenting Payment Partnered	Formerly Parenting Payment Single
assessment of circumstances beyond the job seekers control		
Approved overseas absence	<20	<20
Major personal disruption at home, e.g. fire, burglary, storm, accident	<20	<20
Bereavement period	<20	<20
Principal Carer Parent - domestic violence	<20	<20
Principal Carer Parent - relationship breakdown	<20	<20
Community Service Order	<20	<20
Total with exemptions	843	2789

Source: DHS Administrative Data as at 27 February 2015

*Claiming Disability Support Pension is an interim status whereby recipients do not have an Activity Test or Participation Requirement.

Note: Figures include recipients of Newstart Allowance who are entitled to be paid on the Centrelink payment system, and are not in receipt of CDEP Participation Supplement or zero rate of payment;

Table 2

Date	Number of Principal Carer Parents on Activity Tested Income Support Payments (NSA, PPP, PPS or YA(o)) with the following types of Exemptions:		
	Domestic Violence	Major Personal Crisis	Relationship Breakdown
End June 2008	51	531	0
End June 2009	38	598	0
End June 2010	38	539	0
End June 2011	43	652	0
End June 2012	77	650	0
End June 2013	64	712	<20
End June 2014	67	639	<20

Source: DHS Administrative Data as at 18 March 2015

Note: Figures include recipients of Newstart Allowance who are entitled to be paid on the Centrelink payment system, and are not in receipt of CDEP Participation Supplement or zero rate of payment;