

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

Outcome 3 - Employment

DEEWR Question No. EW0124_14

Senator Sinodinos asked on 4 June 2013, Hansard page 20

Question:

Job seeker exemptions

Ms Paul: Would you like what we have, because it may be easier than trying to work it in that way, and we may not have it, anyway.

Senator SINODINOS: Is this the median?

Ms Paul: Yes. If it is to hand—

Ms Drayton: We have quite a bit of information around that. The short-term ones represent 87 per cent of all the exemptions. Those are the ones that are generally of a 13-week duration and could go on a bit longer. The long-term exemptions are 9,430. They are usually the legislated ones in respect of parents, in particular, and their caring responsibilities. That split between the short-term and the long-term, over the last four years, has remained fairly consistent. So it does appear that the majority of them are short-term. The average of those short-term exemptions is 13-weeks. We will see what else we can find out for you for those who have had repeat exemptions.

Senator SINODINOS: How many of these job seekers have had an exemption for six months or more?

Ms Drayton: There are two different kinds of exemption. The short-term ones go for 13 weeks, and the longer-term ones are for a maximum of 52 weeks. The 13-week exemptions can be extended. You are asking about the ones that have gone for more than six months. I am not sure that I have that exact figure. I know how many have short-term and long-term exemptions.

Mr Stiller: We have the median average for the short-term and long-term exemption but we do not have the data that indicates how many did go for more than six months.

Senator SINODINOS: Okay.

Mr Stiller: But we can take that on notice.

Senator SINODINOS: That is fine.

Answer

The following table provides a breakdown of income support recipients who have had an exemption from the activity test or participation requirements as at 29 March 2013 where the total period of the exemption is greater than or less than 6 months.

The recorded exemption period is from the earliest start date of consecutive episodes for the current exemption to the exemption end/review date, so this includes any further periods of exemption which have been granted to the same job seeker.

Length of exemption	Number of exemptions
Six months or more	15,386

Source: DHS Administrative Data as at 29 March 2013