

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017**

**Administrative Appeals Tribunal**

**Question No. BE17-093**

**Senator Siewert asked the following question on 25 May 2017:**

Senator SIEWERT: Thank you. In terms of the complexity of the cases for DSP, I have been told that there are a lot of people who are struggling with DSP and they need more advocacy support. Have you noticed that? Do you record that sort of information?

Mr Matthies: We record information about representation but—

Senator SIEWERT: How many of those had representation present? I am going to the DSP.

Mr Matthies: I think we only have figures for the 2015-16 financial year.

Senator SIEWERT: Do you have them so you could take it on notice for the current financial year?

Mr Matthies: We can do that.

Senator SIEWERT: That would be appreciated. So how many for 2015-16?

Mr Matthies: For first review in 2015-16, 77 per cent of applicants were self-represented in DSP cases.

Senator SIEWERT: That is for DSP. What about in the debt scenario?

Mr Matthies: We do not have those figures to hand.

Senator SIEWERT: Why is that? You do not record that information for debt?

Mr Matthies: We do, but we would have to take on notice.

**The response to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:**

The following table sets out the number and proportion of applicants and other parties who were self-represented in applications for first review of decisions recorded by the AAT as concerning disability support pension (DSP) or a debt that were finalised by the AAT's Social Services & Child Support Division in 2015–16 and in the 2016–17 financial year to 30 April 2017.

A person has been counted as self-represented if the AAT's case management system does not record a representative for that person at the time the application was finalised, whether the representative is a lawyer, accountant, other type of advocate, friend or relative.

<b>Self-represented parties in finalised applications for first review</b>	<b>2015–16</b>		<b>2016–17 to 30 April 2017</b>	
	No.	%	No.	%
Applications concerning DSP	4,876	77%	4,226	77%
Applications concerning a debt	2,972	84%	2,922	86%