

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

10 – 11 February 2010

Question: aet 48

Topic: First Home Saver Accounts

Hansard Page: Written

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. The Government made Home Saver Accounts available on October 1 2008. How many home saver accounts have been opened to date? Can APRA break these figures down by month?
2. How many accounts have been closed since October 1 2008, and for what reasons? Can APRA break these figures down by month?
3. How much have the Home Saver Accounts cost the Government since they were introduced in terms of contributions?
4. Does the Government set aside a budget each year to advertise the accounts?
5. Does APRA monitor how the banks are advertising the accounts? Are banks being forced to advertise the accounts?
6. Does APRA have figures of how many Australians accessed their home saver account at the same time as applying for the increased First Home Owner Grant between October 2008 and December 2009?

Answer:

1. APRA currently publishes data on the number and balance of accounts on the APRA website. As at 31 December 2009, there were 16,188 open accounts. APRA collects data on First Home Savers (FHS) accounts on a quarterly basis, therefore a monthly breakdown is not available.
2. During the quarters December 2008 to December 2009, 799 FHS accounts have been closed. APRA does not collect detailed statistics on the reasons for account closure. The limited circumstances in which FHS accounts can be closed are published by the Tax Office on its website.
3. Payments relating to the First Home Saver Accounts totalled \$4.9 million to the end of February 2010.
4. The ATO ran a FHSA advertising campaign in September 2008 at a cost of \$3.164 million (GST exclusive - \$3.48 million GST inclusive).
4. No.
5. No.