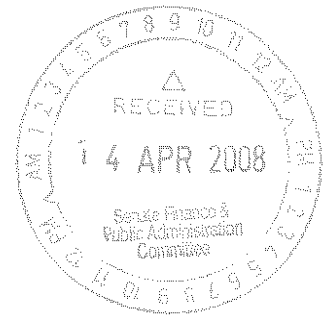


**Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Human Services Portfolio**  
**Department of Human Services**  
Additional Estimates 2007-08 – February 2008



**Question: HS132**

**Outcome 1, Output 2**

**Topic: Child Support Agency – Change Program**

**Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written**

**SENATOR COONAN asked on 22/02/2008:**

Please provide particulars of the status of implementation of the Child Support Agency Change Program.

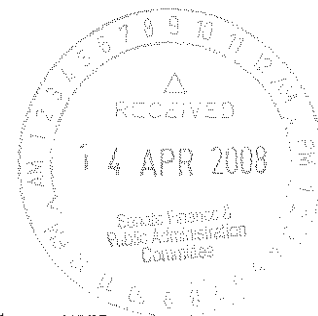
**Answer:**

The Child Support Agency (CSA) is currently undertaking a significant change agenda, which incorporates several components; changes to the child support legislation; compliance activities; and service delivery reforms known as *Building a Better CSA*.

**Child Support Scheme reforms:**

- The CSA is responsible for the service delivery implementation of Child Support Scheme (Scheme) reforms in three stages.
- Stages 1 and 2 of the Scheme reforms have been successfully implemented by CSA, and the evaluation of these stages identified no significant service delivery issues.
- Stage 3 commences on 1 July 2008 and includes a complete change to all aspects of the legislative formula used to calculate child support payments, and requires significant lead time for the completion of major IT system changes, and staff recruitment and training.
- In May 2007 a national communication campaign promoting Stage 3 Scheme reforms commenced with national advertising on radio and in major newspapers and magazines, when customers were encouraged to contact CSA and update their information.
- In October and November 2007, following an initial media campaign, CSA wrote to all 1.4 million parents who are customers of CSA in order to collect additional information about the care of their children, as the new Scheme requires more precise information about levels of care.
- In early 2008, CSA sent all customers newsletters telling them how to obtain more detailed information (through online access or, alternatively, in a hardcopy information booklet).
- Additional service delivery staff have been recruited to support the implementation of Stage 3 Scheme reforms. These include around 450 staff in a dedicated national Transition Team who are responsible for handling the majority of enquiries from parents regarding the new Scheme until July 2008.

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- Comprehensive training strategies have been developed and are being rolled out to ensure that CSA staff are ready for the effective delivery of Stage 3 Scheme reforms.
- A series of training sessions for key stakeholders (jointly developed between CSA and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)) was held in February 2008 in most capital cities around Australia.
- Development of CSA's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) solutions to support the implementation of Stage 3 Scheme reforms is continuing. The majority of ICT changes required to support the new child support formula have been successfully tested and implemented. Other smaller changes required for 1 July 2008 are being scoped, designed and are on track.
- CSA began sending customers their new (1 July 2008) child support assessments in the week commencing 3 March 2008. It is anticipated that the process of issuing new assessments to all customers will take approximately 10 weeks. CSA customers will be notified of their new child support payments before they come into effect on 1 July 2008.

**Building a Better CSA (BBCSA)**

- BBCSA is a comprehensive range of initiatives, designed to improve service delivery to CSA customers, as well as improved engagement with stakeholders and the community.
- Initiatives include: call recording, reduced team sizes, technical and customer service training, more online services and case management of customers with complex circumstances.
- \$151 million of government funding has been provided to resource these reforms.
- CSA has implemented BBCSA reforms in three major service delivery areas:
  - Improvements in Customer Service Delivery (funding \$106 million) - delivering services which are more customer focused and better meet the needs of parents.
  - Organisational Change – improved customer focus and training (funding \$23 million) – to improve Customer Service Officer's interactions with customers.
  - Improved communication to customers and stakeholder engagement (funding \$22 million) - ensuring that all separated parents have the information and tools they need to better manage the difficult situations they face during separation; and to establish strong levels of engagement between CSA and its stakeholders.
- Overall, implementation of the package is essentially complete, with the following improvements in place:
  - Customer Service Guarantee Receipts for all customers were introduced in April 2006, providing accountability to CSA customers.
  - CSA Online was launched in April 2006 allowing parents and employers to conduct business on-line at a time that suits them best.

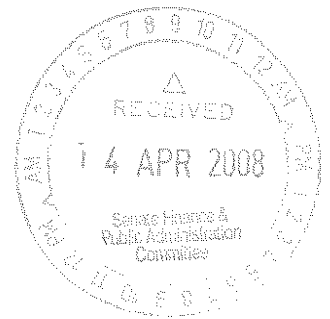
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- Customer service teams have been restructured into smaller, better managed and supported groups (in December 2006).
- Five new CSA Regional Service Centres are in place in Mildura, Tamworth, Warrnambool, Orange and Kalgoorlie.
- In June 2007, Call Recording was introduced.
- A new approach offering more personalised services was piloted and then introduced nationally to service approximately 6,000 parents with more complex and difficult issues from September 2007.
- Frontline staff now receive scheduled regular monthly technical training.
- Customer Focus Training was rolled out progressively to all staff from May-December 2007.
- The introduction of a marketing and media campaign that commenced in April/May 2006 and has continued over the past 12 months to increase customer awareness of service choices including the introduction of a customer newsletter (*Child Support Matters*).
- All high volume CSA letters and forms have been reviewed.
- CSA promoted its translated education and self-help products in multicultural language media throughout 2007.
- In 2007, CSA commenced a marketing campaign to promote *Staying Connected* which is a parental support program.