

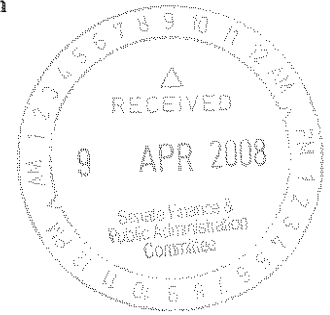
Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Department of Human Services

Additional Estimates 2007-08 – February 2008



**Question:** HS9

**Outcome 1, Output 1**

**Topic:** Department of Human Services – Access Card Savings

**Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice:** Hansard Page F&PA 51

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

**Senator COONAN**—...I just want to get to the savings that have been claimed in respect of axing this card [the Access Card]. You said in answer to a dorothy dixer from Senator Polley that you noted the savings under the Charter of Budget Honesty are estimated at \$1,149 million and you have identified an additional \$29 million in savings for 2007-08, bringing the total to \$1,178 million. In the Charter of Budget Honesty there appears to be a slightly different figure—unless I am misreading it—which looked to be \$1,148 million over the forward estimates...

**Ms Williams**—Senator Coonan, that was identified later when we had a look at the entire saving and what could be handed back.

**Senator COONAN**—Yes, that might be a better way to do it because obviously I want to get to some sort of net position, if that is possible. I am sure you have come quite prepared but I do appreciate that it might be necessary for us to get something down on notice so that we capture what we want. These are not meant to be trick questions, I promise you. It is just that I want to get a clear view about what has been spent, what has been returned and where we are at. I could not quite get it from the minister's answer.

**Senator Ludwig**—We can provide that again on notice if you want, Senator.

**Answer:**

It is anticipated that total Access Card Program expenditure will be \$141 million as at June 2008. Savings of \$1,162 million over a four year period commencing 2007-08 have been returned to Government. \$15 million spread over three years has been retained by the department to allow the retention of expertise in the department.