

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

**ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES – 9 FEBRUARY 2010
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Same-Sex Couples

Question reference number: HS 17

Senator: BOYCE

Type of question: Hansard F&PA page 96, 9 February 2010

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 March 2010

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator BOYCE - From some figures I have pulled out I see that the difference in the maximum level available to two singles and a couple could in fact be over \$300 a fortnight. Is that right?

Ms Beath - I would have to take the exact amount on notice, but there is a significant difference between the rates—

Answer:

The payment type (pension, benefit or supplement) including the individual or couple's circumstances (income and assets) would affect the difference between the single rate and the couple rate.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has advised that pension payments as at 10 March 2010 are: single pension rate per fortnight (maximum rate) \$615.80 for an individual, and couple pension rate per fortnight (maximum rate) \$464.20 per person.

For two singles and a couple, the difference between \$1,231.60 (twice the rate of \$615.80 for an individual) and \$928.40 for a couple (\$464.20 for each member of the couple) is \$303.20.

These amounts exclude the Pension Supplement and any ancillary benefits which pensioners may receive as an additional payment to the base pension.