

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and agencies

Budget Estimates 2006-2007, 25 May 2006

Question: HS 27

Outcome 1, Output 1.1

Topic: Centrelink – Welfare to Work - Advertising Campaign - Privacy

Hansard Page or Written Question on Notice: F&PA 120

SENATOR WONG asked on 25/5/2006:

Mr Whalan—The second one is the terms of privacy. I can confirm that no Centrelink officer has handed over any information in respect of individual customers for a market research exercise in relation to Welfare to Work.

Senator WONG—I am going to give you the opportunity to take that on notice. I will try and give a bit more information. I said ‘personal details’. That included phone numbers for particular payment recipients. The relevant research group was called Open Mind Research Group. In fairness, I will give you the opportunity to discuss this with your officers over the next period. I want to know exactly what information was provided to DEWR or any other department for the purposes of a testing and advertising campaign or market research in relation to an advertising campaign. I also want to know whether that complied with Centrelink’s privacy policy.

Mr Whalan—I will take that on notice.

Answer:

I can confirm that no Centrelink officer has handed over any information in respect of individual customers to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations for a market research exercise. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations extracted the relevant data from Centrelink’s customer database to undertake the research in accordance with Social Security Law and Privacy Law and in line with arrangements under the Business Partnership Agreement.

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 2 hours and 26 minutes at an estimated cost of \$148.