

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Department of Human Services

Budget Estimates 2007-08 - May 2007

Question: HS21

Outcome 1, Output 1

Topic: Department of Human Services – Access Card Programme Budget.

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SENATOR WONG asked on 24/05/2007:

Senator WONG—I think what I am trying to get at is whether there is an assumption about what the effect of this measure will be in terms of savings in order to get to a net figure. As I understand your evidence, you are saying that there are a number of measures in terms of the department's financial position where they are ending in terms of expenditure and so obviously there is a negative \$4.7 million figure. That is fine, but what I am interested in with the access card, if this is a net figure, is: what are the savings that you are assuming as a result of this measure will be effected? How are they calculated and how does that affect these figures? Is that clear?

Ms Williams—Could we take it on notice?

Answer:

The Government has decided not to proceed with the Access Card Program. Details of funding to be returned to the Budget will be provided as part of the forthcoming Budgetary processes. With respect to the specific questions asked by the Senator, the answers are as follow:

The Access Card Program budget (\$1.089b) was a net amount inclusive of Departmental savings for Centrelink and Medicare Australia, totalling \$74.155m over four years.

Medicare savings totalling \$36.672m were based on:

- reductions in the number of Medicare enrolments due to customers already having an access card;
- reduction in the number of Medicare cards, enrolment forms and letters produced; and
- reduction in telephone enquiries due to customers redirecting enquiries to the access card call centre.

Centrelink savings totalling \$37.483m were based on:

- reduction in the time to process new claims and updates for customers, by streamlining proof of identity requirements for customers who have an access card; and
- reduction in the number of concession cards being issued to customers who have an access card.