

in failing to meet their obligations without a reasonable excuse may have their income support payments suspended until they comply.

Before suspension is imposed, Centrelink will actively work with parents to assist them comply with their requirements and to determine whether parents have a reasonable excuse for their incapacity to comply. Once parents demonstrate they are taking reasonable steps to ensure their children are attending school, income support payments will be restored with back payment.

Community Development Employment Projects

(Question No. 119)

Mr Abbott asked the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 5 June 2008:

In respect of Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP): has she received any departmental advice about the impact of reinstating CDEP in Northern Territory townships subject to the intervention, if so: (a) what does the advice indicate about the feasibility of quarantining the payments received by CDEP participants; (b) will reinstating CDEP help Aboriginal people find employment; and (c) will she release this advice to the public.

Ms Macklin—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

Advice about reinstating CDEP in transitioned communities in the Northern Territory is clear that under existing legislation CDEP Scheme payments are not included in the categories of payments that are subject to the income management regime.

In areas where CDEP continues to operate in the Northern Territory, employment outcomes are being achieved and the availability of the program in the areas it was removed by the previous government is also expected to help Indigenous Australians move into non-CDEP employment.

Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

(Question No. 121)

Mr Abbott asked the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 5 June 2008:

- (1) Why will changes to card holder eligibility cost \$19.4 million to administer; and what is the detailed breakdown of these expenses.
- (2) How many people will lose eligibility for the card as a result of the Budget's changes to the eligibility criteria.
- (3) Has the Government changed its estimates for the costs of the Medicare Safety Net as result of the changes to card eligibility. (4) Is the Government aware that in some States the card provides eligibility for a range of concessions for seniors; has the Government discussed with the States the flow-on savings concerning the costs of providing these concessions; and is the Government planning to adjust State funding as a result.

Ms Macklin—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

Responsible Economic Management – Commonwealth Seniors Health Card – adjusted taxable income test.

- (1) Departmental expenses for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to administer this measure are \$18.37 million over four years, as shown in the 2008-09 Portfolio Budget Statements.

Funds	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	TOTAL
FaHCSIA	0.29	0.05	0.04	0.00	0.38m
Payments to Centrelink	11.27	3.27	1.57	1.58	17.69m
Payments to SSAT	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.30m
Total Departmental	11.56	3.42	1.71	1.68	18.37m

The majority of Centrelink costs are in 2008-09 and relate to changes to forms and publicity material, IT systems costs, and advising and reviewing customers.

- (2) Around 22,000 customers will lose eligibility in 2009-10.
- (3) Yes, these are reflected in the Health and Ageing portfolio.
- (4) The Commonwealth does not provide funding to the States and Territories for concessions they may offer Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders. Any concessions provided are at their discretion.

Indigenous Communities

(Question No. 124)

Mr Abbott asked the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 5 June 2008:

In respect of the Northern Territory Intervention: (a) what measures have been implemented to monitor alcohol sales, especially large purchases of alcohol by people who might be subject to the intervention's measures; and (b) are alcohol sales of more than \$100 supposed to be recorded, if so, (i) is this happening, (ii) are officials being notified of such sales, and (iii) what follow-up action is taken.