



Australian Government
Child Support Agency



ATTORNEY-
GENERAL'S
DEPARTMENT

Child Support Scheme

Facts and Figures

2003-04

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GENERAL'S
DEPARTMENT**

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Comments on this paper

Comments on this paper are welcomed and should be addressed to:

Director
Business Analysis and Research
Child Support Agency
Dept of Family and Community Services
40 Cameron Avenue
BELCONNEN ACT 2617

Index

Summary Sheet	6
Introduction	7
1.0 A Brief Overview and History of the Australian Child Support Scheme	7
1.1 The Aims of the Child Support Scheme	7
1.2 A Brief History of the Child Support Scheme	7
1.3 The Child Support Formula	8
1.4 Administrative Arrangements between CSA, FaCS and A–GD	9
1.4.1 <i>The Child Support Agency in the Department of Family and Community Services</i>	9
1.4.2 <i>The Role of the Department of Family and Community Services</i>	9
1.4.3 <i>The Role of Centrelink</i>	9
1.4.4 <i>The Role of the Attorney–General’s Department</i>	10
1.5 How the Child Support Scheme works	10
2.0 Reasonable Action to Obtain Child Support	10
2.1 Child Support Customers	10
2.2 Maintenance Action being taken by FaCS Child Support Customers	11
3.0 Caseload	12
3.1 Active Caseload	12
3.2 Caseload by Stage and Collection Method	12
3.3 International Cases	14
3.4 Assessment Type	15
3.5 Change of Assessment	16
3.6 Type of Care Arrangement	17

4.0	Client Overview by Collection Method and Stage	18
4.1	Number of Clients	18
4.2	Number of Children	19
	<i>4.2.1 Children covered by Child Support Assessments (Stage 2)</i>	19
	<i>4.2.2 Payers' Subsequent Families</i>	20
4.3	Number and Gender of Payers and Payees	21
4.4	Age of Cases	22
4.5	Income of Payers and Payees	22
4.6	Income Sources of CSA Payers who Lodge Tax Returns	24
5.0	Scheme Outcomes	25
5.1	Liabilities	25
	<i>5.1.1 Liabilities by CSA and Private Collect</i>	25
	<i>5.1.2 Average Child Support Liabilities</i>	27
5.2	Payments	28
	<i>5.2.1 Total Credits and Liabilities</i>	28
	<i>5.2.2 Child Support Transferred</i>	29
	<i>5.2.3 Collections—CSA Collect Cases</i>	30
	<i>5.2.4 Liabilities and Debt—CSA Collect Cases</i>	31
	<i>5.2.5 Debt—CSA Collect Cases</i>	33
6.0	Legal Services Overview	36
6.1	Background	36
6.2	Statistics and Advice Work Types	37
	<i>6.2.1 Community Legal Services Statistics</i>	37

7.0	Savings and Costs	37
7.1	Savings	37
7.2	Scheme Costs	38
7.3	Comparisons with Overseas Agencies	39
7.4	CSA Staff	39
7.5	CSA Telephone Performance	40
Appendices		
Appendix 1: Contact Details		41
Appendix 2: Amounts Used in Child Support Assessments		45

Child Support Scheme—Key Facts and Figures

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Support for Children			
Child Support transfers:			
CSA Collect	\$636.4m	\$672.0m	\$790.5
Private Collect	\$814.2m	\$1,272.0m	\$1,395.7
Total	\$1,450.6m	\$1,944.0m	\$2,186.2
CSA collection performance since inception:	87.7%	87.9%	89.2%
Total Collections	\$5,392.9m	\$6,113.1m	\$6,970.4m
Total Liabilities	\$6,151.7m	\$6,957.2m	\$7,818.0m
Average annual liabilities per case:			
Stage 1 CSA Collect	\$2,753.09	\$2,889.16	\$2,902.73
Stage 1 Private Collect	\$2,581.95	\$2,554.06	\$2,616.91
Stage 2 CSA Collect	\$4,231.96	\$4,402.59	\$4,560.01
Stage 2 Private Collect	\$5,593.65	\$5,777.56	\$5,943.52
Support for Parents			
CSA Caseload:	657,332	685,969	712,680
% CSA Collect	50.6%	49.4%	48.2%
% Private Collect	49.4%	50.6%	51.8%
% Stage 1 Court Orders	4.7%	3.2%	2.3%
% Stage 2 Formula Assessment	95.3%	96.8%	97.7%
Children who are eligible for child support payments (Eligible Children — Stage 2 Cases only)	1,002,663	1,034,593	1,078,761
CSA client numbers:			
Payers	610,230	630,701	661,243
Payees	606,941	626,739	657,339
Total	1,217,171	1,257,440	1,318,582
Legal Services Funding	\$5.3m	\$5.5m	\$5.5m
CSS Savings & Costs to Government			
Total savings to Government outlays	\$423.0m	\$433.5m	n/a
Scheme costs by agency:			
CSA	\$214.0m	\$233.2m	\$257.4m
FaCS	\$2.3m	\$1.4m	\$1.5m
A–GD	\$5.3m	\$5.5m	\$5.5m
Dollars collected by CSA for each dollar spent.	\$6.78	\$8.30	\$8.49
CSA cost to collect each dollar.	14.7 cents	12.0 cents	11.8 cents

Introduction

This report is the eighth edition of *Child Support Scheme Facts and Figures* and is an annual publication released jointly by the Agencies and Commonwealth Departments with responsibilities under the Child Support Scheme.

1.0 A Brief Overview and History of the Australian Child Support Scheme

1.1 The Aims of the Child Support Scheme

The Australian Child Support Scheme was introduced in 1988 to:

“strike a fairer balance between public and private forms of support [for children] to alleviate the poverty of sole parent families.”¹

The Scheme aims to ensure that:

- parents share in the cost of supporting their children according to their capacity;
- adequate support is available to all children not living with both parents;
- Commonwealth involvement and expenditure is limited to the minimum necessary for ensuring children’s needs are met;
- work incentives for both parents to participate in the labour force are not impaired; and
- the overall arrangements are non-intrusive to personal privacy and are simple, flexible and efficient.²

1.2 A Brief History of the Child Support Scheme

Prior to the introduction of the Child Support Scheme, child support could only be obtained by the parents reaching an agreement or by seeking an order from a court. This meant that child support was effectively denied to those parents who could not reach an agreement with their former partner and could not afford to take court action.

During the 1970s and 1980s there was a rapid growth in the number of single parents with day-to-day care and responsibility for the children of a former marriage or relationship. There was community concern and criticism about the prevailing child maintenance system. Three issues were of particular concern:

- the non payment of maintenance;
- the low levels of maintenance payments; and
- reliance on social welfare payments.

A number of reviews and studies resulted in the government deciding to establish a child support system to overcome these problems. The government published *Child Support—A discussion paper on child maintenance* in 1986 and, after extensive consultation with external parties, it implemented the Child Support Scheme in two stages.

Stage 1 was introduced by the *Child Support (Registration and Collection) Act 1988*. This Act gave the Commissioner of Taxation, as Child Support Registrar, the responsibility for collecting child support payments in respect of court orders and court-registered agreements. This collection is undertaken on application from the parent entitled to receive child support.

¹ Cabinet Sub-Committee on Maintenance, *Child Support: discussion paper on child maintenance* (1986), p. 14.

² *An examination of the operation and effectiveness of the Child Support Scheme, Government Response to the Report by the Joint Select Committee on Certain Family Law Issues*, November 1997, p. 3.

Stage 2 was introduced by the *Child Support (Assessment) Act 1989*. This Act established a further responsibility on the Child Support Registrar to administratively assess child support using a formula based on the income of both parents, and therefore their capacity to pay. Stage 2 applies only to parents who separated on or after 1 October 1989, or who have a child born on or after that date.

1.3 The Child Support Formula

CSA uses a legislative formula to calculate the amount of child support to be paid. The formula is applied to the liable parent's taxable income (which, for CSA purposes, includes rental losses, exempt foreign employment income and Reportable Fringe Benefits):

1. Less an allowance for living expenses and for each natural or adopted dependent child living with the liable parent;
2. Less half the resident parent's excess income over average weekly earnings for all employees.

After making the above deductions, a percentage of the remaining income is paid as support. The percentage varies according to the number of children:

No. of Children	1	2	3	4	5 or more
Child Support	18%	27%	32%	34%	36%

The basic formula used to assess the annual rate of child support is:

$$\{ (A-B) - (C/2) \} \times D = E$$

Where:

A is the child support income amount (taxable income)

B is the exempted income amount

C is the amount of payee income above the disregarded income amount

D is the child support percentage

E is the amount payable by the payer

Taxable income used in the child support formula is the income shown on the payer's tax return for the last financial year. For child support purposes the maximum taxable income used in the formula from January 2004 was \$126,659.

A payer's exempt income is an allowance for living expenses and is deducted before the child support percentage is applied (see Table 1.2).

	Exempt Income 1.1.2003–31.12.2003	Exempt Income 1.1.2004–31.12.2004
No natural or adopted children	\$12,315	\$12,950
With natural or adopted children	\$20,557	\$21,622
Allowance for child under 13	\$2,235	\$2,307
Allowance for child 13–15	\$3,119	\$3,219
Allowance for child 16–17	\$4,672	\$4,914

Source: Relevant FaCS Pension Rates 2003–04, CCH Court Handbook and the Child Support Agency's website www.csa.gov.au

If a payee's child support income amount exceeds the disregarded income amount³, then the payer's income is reduced by 50 per cent of the payee's excess income for the period concerned (the annual rate of the child support amount cannot be reduced below 25 per cent of the rate that would have been payable if the payee had less than the disregarded income amount). The payee's disregarded income amount is that part of the payee's income below Average Weekly Earnings of all employees (\$38,168 for 1.1.2004 to 31.12.2004).

If either parent's income has decreased by 15 per cent or more since the previous year of income, they could apply for the assessment to be varied to reflect their current income.

³ The "disregarded income amount" recognises that the carer makes a significant contribution to the care of the children covered by the assessment. See Appendix 2 for more details.

1.4 Administrative Arrangements between the Child Support Agency, the Department of Family and Community Services and the Attorney-General's Department

Until October 1998 the Child Support Scheme was administered by the Child Support Agency as part of the Australian Taxation Office, the Department of Social Security and the Attorney-General's Department.

In October 1998 CSA became part of the new Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS). The Scheme partners are the Department of Family and Community Services, incorporating CSA, and the Attorney-General's Department.

1.4.1 The Role of the Child Support Agency in the Department of Family and Community Services

The Child Support Agency was created to administer the *Child Support (Registration and Collection) Act 1988* and the *Child Support (Assessment) Act 1989*.

The role of CSA is to:

- register cases;
- to assess child support payable (Stage 2 cases only);
- collect payments where requested;
- provide an information service for parents on child support matters;
- refer clients to government and other organisations where requested; and
- administer international cases where requested.

These activities are undertaken in Branch Offices (currently 16) around Australia. CSA also has Regional Service Centres located in 20 Centrelink offices and one ATO Office (Darwin) in regional Australia.⁴

CSA continues to have access to taxation and Centrelink information to enable efficient assessment and collection of child support.

1.4.2 The Role of the Department of Family and Community Services

The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) portfolio is responsible for a broad range of social policy issues affecting Australian society and the living standards of Australian families, communities and individuals. The portfolio is responsible for income support, housing policy, community support, disability services, child care services and family policy and programs, including family payments, child support and family relationship services. FaCS advises the Government on all policy issues within the portfolio, and manages the delivery of FaCS services through a range of service providers. FaCS also advises the Government on the social policy impact of wider government policy including taxation, superannuation and savings policy. The role of FaCS in the Child Support Scheme covers:

- strategic policy development, analysis and research;
- liaison with other agencies;
- ensuring appropriate linkages between income support and child support; and
- reporting to Government and Parliament.

1.4.3 The Role of Centrelink

Centrelink is the primary service delivery agency for the FaCS portfolio and delivers a range of Government assistance programs, including family payments through the Family Assistance Office. Centrelink's primary role in terms of the Child Support Scheme is:

- ensuring applicants for more than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit take reasonable action to obtain child support; and
- adjusting Family Tax Benefit to individuals in receipt of child support payments.

⁴ "More child support services for Regional Australia", Media Release, Hon. Larry Anthony, Minister for Community Services, 31 August 1999.

Over 550 Family Assistance Offices have been set up across Australia in Centrelink Customer Service Centres, Medicare offices and Australian Tax Office shopfronts to provide families with a range of family payments.

1.4.4 The Role of the Attorney-General's Department

The Attorney-General's Department (AGD) has a general responsibility to advise the Government on matters relating to family law. The Department also provides Legal Aid support to eligible parents under the Child Support Scheme.

1.5 How the Child Support Scheme Works

Australian families may make child support arrangements in one of three ways:

- Self-Administration: an entirely private arrangement between the parents, which includes cases where child support is not sought;
- Private Collect: registration and assessment by the Child Support Agency but with payment made directly between the parents; or
- CSA Collect: registration, assessment and collection by the Child Support Agency.

Registration with CSA can proceed on the application of either parent. The application can be to register a court order, a child support agreement or for CSA to issue an administrative assessment.

Payers can make payments directly to CSA where CSA collection is required. Alternatively, child support can be deducted from a payer's salary or wages in much the same way that income tax is deducted.

Where a payment is not made, and CSA is unable to come to a voluntary payment arrangement with the payer, the Registrar has a range of administrative enforcement powers available, including:

- deduction from salary and wages;
- interception of income tax refunds;
- collection of monies owed to the defaulting parent from third parties under Section 72A, e.g. accessing funds in savings accounts, superannuation funds and solicitors' trust accounts;
- deductions from Centrelink benefits for the minimum liability of \$260 a year and deductions from Family Tax Benefit in limited circumstances (when separated parents are sharing the care of a child for whom child support is being collected).

In addition, debts can be pursued through the courts to seek orders for sale of assets and property, or for the garnishment of regular non wage income sources where administrative collection is not possible.

2.0 Reasonable Action to Obtain Child Support

2.1 Child Support Customers

Centrelink and CSA have mutual clients primarily as a result of the Maintenance Action Test. As mentioned in section 1.4.3, Family Tax Benefit Part A (FTB Part A) customers who have children from a previous relationship must take reasonable action to obtain child support. A high proportion of applications for registration with CSA, therefore, come from Centrelink. Reasonable action for Stage 2 customers means lodging an application for assessment under the child support formula and either:

- having the payments collected by CSA; or
- privately collecting 100 per cent of the assessed amount; or
- lodging a child support agreement that meets 100 per cent of the assessed amount.

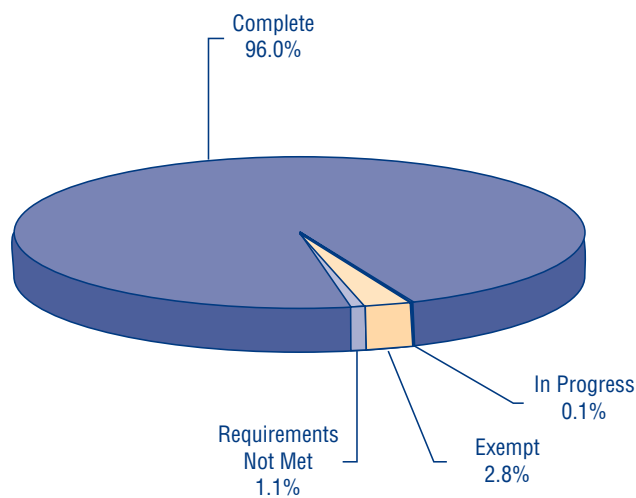
Table 2.1: Action Taken to Obtain Child Support

Maintenance Action	Number of Children	%
Complete	1,124,368	96.0
In Progress	1,688	0.1
Exempt	33,250	2.8
Requirements Not Met	12,364	1.1
Total	1,171,670	100.0

Source: FaCS, July 2004.

Note: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Chart 2.1: Maintenance Action



Source: Family and Children Branch, FaCS, July 2004.

2.2 Maintenance Action Being Taken by Family Tax Benefit Customers

Maintenance action is recorded by Centrelink for each child because a parent may have different maintenance action in progress for different children e.g. where the children have different fathers.

The following is a summary of maintenance action being taken on behalf of children of FTB Part A customers. By June 2004:

- a total of 96.0 per cent of children of FTB Part A customers had maintenance action completed on their behalf. This means these cases were registered with CSA or an application had been lodged;

- another 2.8 per cent of children of FTB Part A customers were granted an exemption; and
- the remaining 1.2 per cent of children of FTB Part A customers at that time did not have reasonable maintenance action requirements met on their behalf or their application was still in progress.

Based on the figures in Table 2.1 and the chart above, it can be seen that reasonable maintenance action requirements have been met for almost 99 per cent of children (96.0 per cent “complete” plus 2.8 per cent “exempt”) of FaCS child support customers. In fact, at June 2004, only 1.2 per cent of children did not have reasonable maintenance action requirements met on their behalf or their application was still in progress.

3.0 Caseload

3.1 Active Caseload⁵

As at June 2004 there were 712,680 active cases. Some 2.3 per cent (or 16,048 cases) were Stage 1 active cases, and 97.7 per cent (or 696,632 cases) were Stage 2 active cases.⁶ Each case has two CSA clients; the payer (the parent who pays the child support) and the payee (the parent who receives the child support). There are fewer payer and payee clients than active cases as some

payers and payees are involved in more than one case. As a result, CSA had approximately 1.3 million payers and payees by June 2004.

3.2 Caseload by Stage and Collection Method

The Stage 1 active caseload has been declining since 1993. This will continue as the children in Stage 1 move out of the child support eligible population. The trends in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 caseloads are reflected in Table 3.1 and Chart 3.1.

Table 3.1: Caseload by Stage¹

30 June	Stage 1 Number	%	Stage 2 Number	%	Total
1991	62,758	60.9	40,348	39.1	103,106
1992	70,787	50.7	68,865	49.3	139,652
1993	73,819	34.9	137,762	65.1	211,581
1994	61,082	22.0	217,103	78.0	278,185
1995	60,226	17.9	276,091	82.1	336,317
1996	58,442	14.8	336,466	85.2	394,908
1997	54,645	12.2	393,400	87.8	448,045
1998	50,935	10.3	443,599	89.7	494,534
1999	45,986	8.6	489,583	91.4	535,569
2000	40,664	7.1	529,046	92.9	569,710
2001	34,650	5.7	577,682	94.3	612,332
2002	30,626	4.7	626,706	95.3	657,332 ²
2003	22,235	3.2	663,734	96.8	685,969 ³
2004	16,048	2.3	696,632	97.7	712,680 ⁴

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Note: 1. Active caseload figures for Stage 1 in this table include "processing not finalised", "registered and collecting", "elections not to collect" and "keyed court orders/no applications". Active caseload figures for Stage 2 in this table include "processing not finalised", "total assessed, registered and collecting" and "total assessed but not collecting".

2. The FaCS Annual Report 2001–02 reports 667,957 cases, which is higher than the figure recorded in this table and elsewhere in this report. The higher figure in the annual report includes cases that had ended with arrears, whereas this table only counts cases with a current liability (nil and above nil liabilities).

3. The FaCS Annual Report 2002–03 reports 711,541 cases, which includes cases that had ended with arrears, whereas this table only counts cases with a current liability (nil and above nil liabilities).

4. The FaCS Annual Report 2003–04 reports 747,830 cases, which includes cases that had ended with arrears, whereas this table only counts cases with a current liability (nil and above nil liabilities).

Percentages may not add due to rounding.

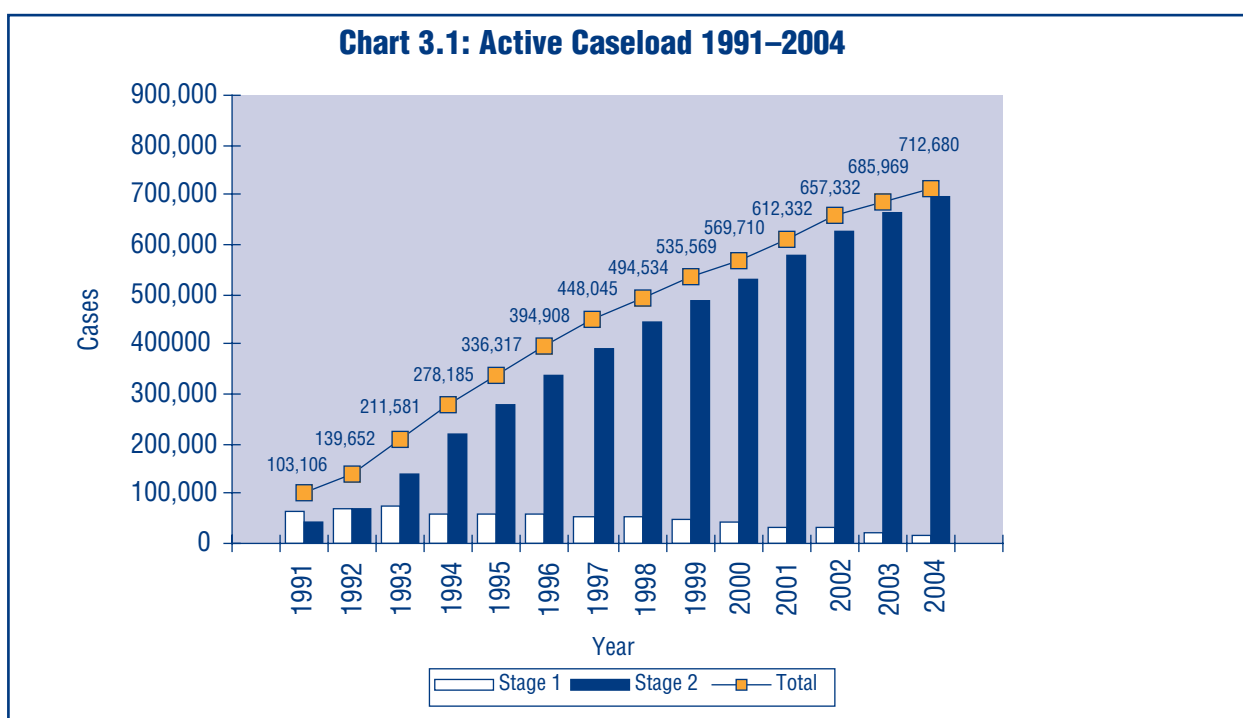
⁵ "Active Cases" include Stage 1 and Stage 2 cases that are registered and have a current liability collected, where processing is not finalised, and cases that have been assessed but where the liability is being collected privately.

⁶ Child Support Agency Monthly Performance Report for June 2004 (CS5), p. 7.

Chart 3.1 shows the annual rate of increase in active cases was lower in 2003–04 than 2002–03. Between 1993 and 1994 the caseload grew by an average of 5,550 cases per month. This compares with an increase of 3,750 cases per month between June 2001 and June 2002, an increase of 2,386 cases between June 2002 and

June 2003 and 2,226 cases between June 2003 and June 2004.

The increase in the percentage of Private Collect cases to 51.8 per cent of all cases (see Table 3.2 and Charts 3.2 and 3.3 below) is consistent with the Government's aim to ensure child support arrangements are non-intrusive to personal privacy.



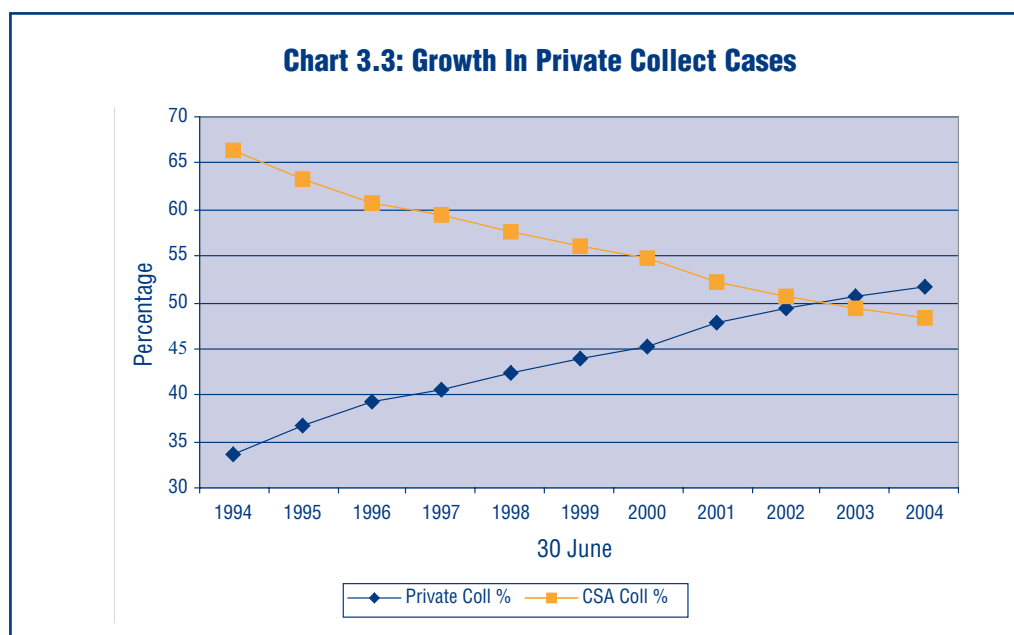
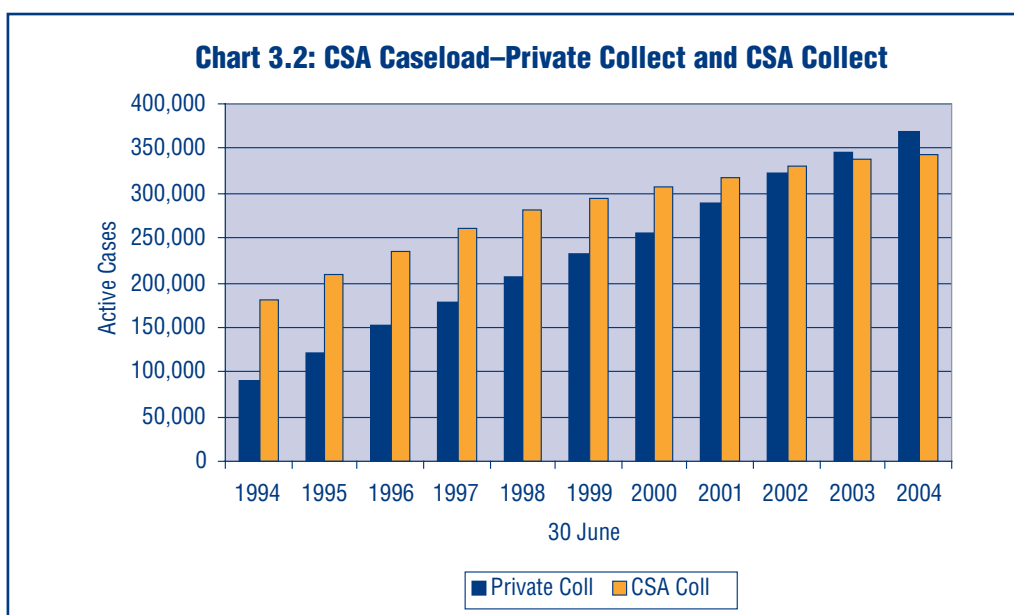
Source: Client Research Unit, June 2004.

Table 3.2: Caseload by Collection Method¹

End June	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
1994	180,581	66.4	91,468	33.6	272,049
1995	209,477	63.3	121,514	36.7	330,991
1996	235,008	60.7	152,018	39.3	387,026
1997	261,000	59.3	179,241	40.7	440,241
1998	281,473	57.6	207,569	42.4	489,042
1999	295,290	56.0	232,064	44.0	527,354
2000	308,047	54.8	254,237	45.2	562,284
2001	317,724	52.3	289,443	47.7	607,167
2002	331,202	50.6	323,234	49.4	654,436
2003	338,055	49.4	346,815	50.6	684,870
2004 ²	342,414	48.2	368,619	51.8	711,033

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. The active caseload numbers in this table exclude cases where processing has not been finalised and therefore does not agree with caseload figures elsewhere in this publication.
2. The CSA Collect total for June 2004 includes 1,679 cases where the payee resides overseas. Percentages may not add due to rounding.



3.3 International Cases

Table 3.3 records the growth in international cases in the Australian Child Support Scheme. The increase has arisen due to a number of legislative and regulatory amendments that came into force on 1 July 2000 that significantly changed how Australia gives effect to its international obligations in relation to child and spousal maintenance. These amendments, and Australia's entry into three international maintenance agreements, have broadened child support arrangements and have transferred the

responsibility for the majority of international child support matters to the Child Support Agency (CSA) using administrative processes. These arrangements are under the following:

- *Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of New Zealand on Child and Spousal Maintenance (Aus–NZ Agreement);*
- *Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Australia for the Enforcement of Maintenance (Support) obligations (US–Australia Agreement);*

- *Hague Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions Relating to Maintenance Obligations 1973* (Hague);
 - *Convention on the Recovery Abroad of Maintenance signed at New York on 20 June 1956* (UNCRAM); and
 - various bilateral reciprocal arrangements (principally with Commonwealth countries and some European countries).
- The effect of the legislative amendments and introduction of the regulations were:
- CSA became the Central Authority responsible for International maintenance matters;
 - extend the eligibility of Australian Administrative Assessments where the liable parents reside in a Reciprocating Jurisdiction (7 exemptions). This allows for new applications for assessments as well as existing assessments to continue where liable parents leave Australia to reside in a Reciprocating Jurisdiction;
 - CSA is able to transmit Australian liabilities for recognition and enforcement to the 92 Reciprocating Jurisdictions;
 - where the liable parent resides in Australia, liabilities determined by a judicial or administrative authority in a reciprocating jurisdiction are now transmitted directly to CSA for registration and enforcement.

Table 3.3: International Caseload and International Cases as a Percentage of Active Caseload

30 June	International Cases	International Cases as a % of the Active Caseload	Active Caseload
1997	1,702	0.38	448,045
1998	1,876	0.38	494,534
1999	2,510	0.47	535,569
2000	2,718	0.48	569,710
2001	5,806	0.95	612,332
2002	9,007	1.37	657,332
2003	14,247	2.07	685,969
2004	17,490 ¹	2.45	712,680

Source: CS5 Report, CSA, June 2004.

Notes: 1. In this table the International Cases total for 2004 is 259 higher than the total recorded in Table 4.8 because this table also includes international cases where processing has not been finalised.

3.4 Assessment Type

Table 3.4 and Chart 3.4 show the assessment types by CSA Collect and Private Collect arrangements. The majority of assessments are formula based. Private Collect arrangements are

more likely to be based on agreements than CSA Collect arrangements (5.2 per cent as opposed to 3.2 per cent). CSA Collect cases are over 6 times more likely to have a liability that is based on a change of assessment from the formula than Private Collect cases (4.1 per cent to 0.6 per cent).

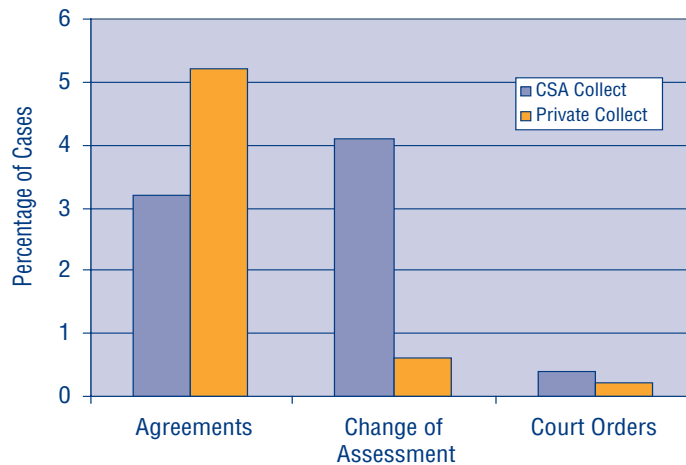
Table 3.4: Stage 2 Caseload by Assessment Type and Collection Method, June 2004¹

Assessment Type	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Formula	306,464	92.3	340,832	94.0	647,296	93.2
Agreements	10,570	3.2	18,972	5.2	29,542	4.3
Change of Assessment	13,533	4.1	2,112	0.6	15,645	2.3
Court Orders	1,380	0.4	554	0.2	1,934	0.3
Total	331,947	100.0	362,470	100.0	694,417	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. Excludes cases where processing was not finalised.
Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Chart 3.4: Assessment Type (excluding formula assessment) for Stage 2 Cases (June 2004)



Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004

3.5 Change of Assessment

In 1992 a change was introduced to allow parents to apply to CSA for a departure from a formula assessment of child support. Prior to that, an application had to be made to the Court. Since 1992 there have been more than 200,000 applications.

For the 12 months ending June 2004, 75 per cent of applications were accepted, and of these, 53 per cent resulted in the assessment being varied. Change of Assessment applications have been declining as a percentage of the active Stage 2 caseload, being 8.3 per cent in 1997–98, 4.8 per cent in 2002–03 and 3.8 per cent in 2003–04.

Table 3.5: Change of Assessment—Stage 2 only, 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004

	Payer Initiated		Payee Initiated		Registrar Initiated		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	%
Applications accepted								
Assessment varied	6,276	42.3	7,616	64.5	371	91.2	14,263	52.8
Assessment not varied	2,998	20.2	1,691	14.3	13	3.2	4,702	17.4
Refused to make decision ¹	1,197	8.1	169	1.4	0	0.0	1,366	5.0
Client agreement	15	0.1	10	0.1	5	1.2	30	0.1
Total	10,486	70.7	9,486	80.3	389	95.6	20,361	75.3
Applications not accepted								
Withdrawn	1,529	10.3	904	7.6	12	0.3	2,445	9.0
Incomplete	2,445	16.5	1,250	10.6	4	1.0	3,699	13.7
Ineligible	356	2.4	175	1.5	2	0.5	533	2.0
Total	4,330	29.3	2,329	19.7	18	4.4	6,677	24.7
Applications finalised	14,816	100.0	11,815	100.0	407	100.0	27,038	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. The CSA case officer may refuse to make a decision where the case is too complex, Section 98E of the Child Support (Registration and Collection) Act.
Percentages may not add due to rounding.

3.6 Type of Care Arrangement

Table 3.6 indicates that care arrangements other than “sole” (where the child spends more than 70 per cent of the nights with one parent) are a

small minority of cases in both groups. Private Collect percentages for cases with “substantial”, “shared” and “major” care, however, are more than twice that of CSA Collect cases.

Table 3.6: Stage 2 Caseload by Care Code, June 2004

Time children spend with payee Care Code	% of Nights	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No	%
Substantial	30.0–39.9	1,060	0.3	2,697	0.7	3,757	0.5
Shared	40.0–59.9	7,064	2.1	24,814	6.8	31,878	4.6
Major	60.0–69.9	6,420	1.9	12,051	3.3	18,471	2.7
Sole	70.0 and over	317,403	95.6	322,908	89.1	640,311	92.2
Total		331,947	100.0	362,470	100.0	694,417	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

4.0 Client Overview by Collection Method and Stage

4.1 Number of Clients

As at June 2004 there were 712,680 active cases recorded on the Child Support System. However, a number of clients are involved in more than one case, meaning that there are fewer payees or

payers than there are cases. The number of payers and payees involved in multiple cases are recorded in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show that around 93 per cent of payers and payees are involved in just one case. About 7 per cent of payers and payees are involved in two cases, while just 0.4 per cent of all payers and payees are involved in three or more cases.

Table 4.1: Payers by Number of Cases and Collection Method, June 2004

Number of Cases	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	280,572	90.5	335,997	95.7	616,569	93.2
2	27,016	8.7	14,323	4.1	41,339	6.3
3	2,271	0.7	779	0.2	3,050	0.5
4	190	0.1	52	0.0	242	0.0
5 and over	39	0.0	4	0.0	43	0.0
Total	310,088	100.0	351,155	100.0	661,243	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Note: 1. This payer total is slightly lower than the total reported elsewhere as this table does not include cases for which processing has not been finalised.

Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Table 4.2: Payees by Number of Cases and Collection Method, June 2004

Number of Cases	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	279,777	90.3	328,494	94.6	608,271	92.5
2	27,998	9.0	18,049	5.2	46,047	7.0
3	2,038	0.7	824	0.2	2,862	0.4
4 and over	122	0.0	37	0.0	159	0.0
Total	309,935	100.0	347,404	100.0	657,339	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

4.2 Number of Children

The following sections record the number of “eligible children” and the number of “relevant dependent children” under Stage 2 of the Child Support Scheme.

4.2.1 Children Covered by Child Support Assessments (Stage 2)

There were 1,078,761 children involved in cases registered with CSA as at 30 June 2004. Children who are eligible to be included in a formula assessment are:

1. children who were born on or after 1 October 1989; or
2. children whose parents separated on or after 1 October 1989; or

3. children who have a sibling born on or after 1 October 1989. The child must also be under 18, not married or in a de facto relationship, not adopted by someone else and either an Australian citizen or resident or present in Australia on the day of application.

Table 4.3 shows the number of children covered by child support assessments by CSA Collect and Private Collect groups. There is little difference in the distribution of eligible children between CSA Collect and Private Collect cases. For example, 62 per cent of Stage 2 CSA Collect cases have one eligible child, while almost 56 per cent of Stage 2 Private Collect cases have one eligible child. There are up to two eligible children in 90 per cent of CSA Collect cases and 88 per cent in Private Collect cases. There are up to three children in about 98 per cent of cases in both CSA Collect and Private Collect categories.

Table 4.3: Eligible Children per Case—Stage 2 cases only, June 2004

No. of Children Per Case	CSA Collect			Private Collect			Total		
	Cases	Children	% of Cases	Cases	Children	% of Cases	Cases	Children	% of Cases
1	206,650	206,650	62.4	201,020	201,020	55.5	407,670	407,670	58.8
2	92,444	184,888	27.9	116,519	233,038	32.2	208,963	417,926	30.1
3	24,757	74,271	7.5	34,353	103,059	9.5	59,110	177,330	8.5
4	5,546	22,184	1.7	8,099	32,396	2.2	13,645	54,580	2.0
5	1,166	5,830	0.4	1,754	8,770	0.5	2,920	14,600	0.4
6	334	2,004	0.1	426	2,556	0.1	760	4,560	0.1
7	97	679	0.0	107	749	0.0	204	1,428	0.0
8 or more	36	297	0.0	44	370	0.0	80	667	0.0
Total	331,030	496,803	100.0	362,322	581,958	100.0	693,352	1,078,761	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, July 2004.

Notes: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Table 4.4 shows a comparison between international and domestic cases. International cases are about 5 per cent more likely to have only one child than domestic cases. Domestic cases

have on average 1.56 children per case while international cases have on average less eligible children (1.48) per case.

⁸ Caseload figures exclude “processing not finalised” cases.

Table 4.4: Eligible Children per Case—Stage 2 Cases only, June 2004

	Domestic cases			International Cases			Total		
	Cases	Children	% of Cases	Cases	Children	% of Cases	Cases	Children	% of Cases
1	397,847	397,847	58.7	9,823	9,823	63.5	407,670	407,670	58.8
2	204,640	409,280	30.2	4,323	8,646	28.0	208,963	417,926	30.1
3	58,097	174,291	8.6	1,013	3,039	6.6	59,110	177,330	8.5
4	13,425	53,700	2.0	220	880	1.4	13,645	54,580	2.0
5	2,859	14,295	0.4	61	305	0.4	2,920	14,600	0.4
6	745	4,470	0.1	15	90	0.1	760	4,560	0.1
7	201	1,407	0.0	3	21	0.0	204	1,428	0.0
8 or more	77	641	0.0	3	26	0.0	80	667	0.0
Total	677,891	1,055,931	100.0	15,461	22,830	100.0	693,352	1,078,761	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

4.2.2 Payers' Subsequent Families

Formula assessments make allowance for "relevant dependent children" of the payer. These are children under the age of 18 years who are the natural or adopted child of a parent and that parent is the sole or principal provider of ongoing daily care for the child, or has major care of the child.

The impact of the presence of relevant dependent children is to increase the payer's exempt income amount. Almost 7 per cent of all assessments are adjusted for relevant children as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Relevant Dependent Children per Case by Collection Method—Stage 2 Cases only, June 2004

No. of Children	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	18,182	5.5	10,073	2.8	28,255	4.1
2	10,322	3.1	4,299	1.2	14,621	2.1
3	2,900	0.9	992	0.3	3,892	0.6
4	730	0.2	214	0.1	944	0.1
5 or more	277	0.1	85	0.0	362	0.1
Total cases with relevant dependent children	32,411	9.8	15,663	4.3	48,074	6.9
Total Stage 2 cases	331,947	100.0	362,470	100.0	694,417	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

⁸ Caseload figures exclude "processing not finalised" cases.

4.3 Number and Gender of Payers and Payees

Table 4.6 shows that 90.5 per cent of CSA Collect payers are male and 9.3 per cent are female.

Furthermore, 87.7 per cent of all Private Collect payers are male and 11.9 per cent are female.

Table 4.7 shows that 9.0 per cent of CSA Collect payees are male and 90.7 per cent of CSA Collect payees are female. Furthermore, 11.7 per cent of Private Collect payees are male and 87.9 per cent are female.

Table 4.6: Payer Gender by Collection Method, June 2004

	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	309,796	90.5	321,909	87.7	631,705	89.0
Female	31,751	9.3	43,687	11.9	75,438	10.6
Total¹	342,379	100.0	367,213	100.0	709,592	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. The 'total' figure includes 2,449 cases where the gender of the payer could not be identified from data held on the Child Support System (832 CSA Collect and 1,617 Private Collect).

Percentages may not add due to rounding and due to the exclusion of cases where payer gender could not be determined from data held on the Child Support computer system.

Table 4.7: Payee Gender by Collection Method, June 2004

	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	30,871	9.0	43,058	11.7	73,929	10.4
Female	310,540	90.7	322,674	87.9	633,214	89.2
Total¹	342,379	100.0	367,213	100.0	709,592	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. The 'total' figure includes 2,449 cases where the gender of the payee could not be identified from data held on the Child Support System (968 CSA Collect and 1,481 Private Collect).

Percentages may not add due to rounding and due to the exclusion of cases where payer gender could not be determined from data held on the Child Support computer system.

4.4 Age of Cases

Table 4.8 divides the caseload into age of cases by domestic and international cases. Age data relates

to the year that the case was first registered. Over 57 per cent of international cases have been registered in the last 4 years; compared with over 32 per cent for domestic cases.

Table 4.8: Age of Cases by Domestic and International Status, June 2004

Case Age in Years ¹ .		Domestic Cases		International Cases		Total	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	2004 ²	32,826	4.7	1,487	8.6	34,313	4.8
2	2003	60,608	8.8	2,273	13.2	62,881	8.9
3	2002	63,725	9.2	2,956	17.2	66,681	9.4
4	2001	69,041	10.0	3,147	18.3	72,188	10.2
5	2000	64,597	9.3	1,649	9.6	66,246	9.3
6	1999	52,812	7.6	791	4.6	53,603	7.6
7	1998	48,996	7.1	717	4.2	49,713	7.0
8	1997	52,740	7.6	746	4.3	53,486	7.5
9	1996	48,107	6.9	655	3.8	48,762	6.9
10	1995	44,320	6.4	579	3.4	44,899	6.3
11	1994	43,997	6.4	573	3.3	44,570	6.3
12	1993	46,124	6.7	595	3.5	46,719	6.6
13	1992	27,726	4.0	392	2.3	28,118	4.0
14	1991	18,039	2.6	308	1.8	18,347	2.6
15	1990	14,121	2.0	216	1.3	14,337	2.0
16	1989	3,658	0.5	118	0.7	3,776	0.5
17	1988	917	0.1	29	0.2	946	0.1
Total		692,354	100.0	17,231	100.0	709,585	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. Data relates to the year the case was registered.

2. The 2004 data is for the half year to 30 June.

Percentages may not add due to rounding.

4.5 Income of Payers and Payees

Tables 4.9, 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 show payer and payee incomes by CSA Collect and Private Collect arrangements from two sources: the Tax Returns Data Base (TRDB) and the Child Support System (CSS). The data from the TRDB is for all parents

who have lodged a tax return, and is the taxable income, i.e. after taxable deductions have been made. The data from the Child Support System includes the TRDB information but also includes estimated or derived income amounts for parents who have not lodged a tax return.

Table 4.9: Payer Child Support Income, June 2004¹

Payers	CSA Collect	Private Collect	Totals
Total number	342,379	367,212	709,592
Median	\$17,994	\$25,559	\$22,333
Average	\$23,795	\$31,935	\$28,017
Maximum	\$3,070,355	\$4,774,292	\$4,774,292

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Note: 1. These incomes include cases with nil liabilities (zero incomes).

Table 4.10: Payer Taxable Income (TRDB), June 2004

Payers ¹	CSA Collect	Private Collect	Totals
Total number	166,421	232,548	398,969
Median	\$30,844	\$34,315	\$32,804
Average	\$34,297	\$39,002	\$37,039
Maximum	\$38,921,926	\$10,959,429	\$38,921,926

Source: Tax Returns Database and Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. There were 310,623 payers who were non-lodgers (175,958 CSA Collect and 134,665 Private Collect).

Table 4.11: Payee Child Support Income, June 2004

Payees	CSA Collect	Private Collect	Totals
Total number	342,379	367,212	709,592
Median ¹	\$11,166	\$11,360	\$11,252
Average ¹	\$15,135	\$15,047	\$15,090
Maximum	\$1,560,000	\$1,080,592	\$1,560,000

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Note: 1. Child Support Median and Average Incomes recorded in this table does not include many of the benefits paid to resident parents by Centrelink.

Table 4.12: Payee Taxable Income (TRDB), June 2004

Payees ¹	CSA Collect	Private Collect	Totals
Total number	176,357	203,294	379,651
Median	\$19,839	\$19,209	\$19,500
Average	\$22,330	\$21,682	\$21,983
Maximum	\$1,194,831	\$1,073,427	\$1,194,831

Source: Tax Returns Database and Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. There were 392,941 payees who were non-lodgers (166,022 CSA Collect and 163,919 Private Collect).

Tables 4.9 to 4.12 show that payer median taxable incomes are significantly greater than the median taxable income of payees. Family Tax Benefit payments are not included in the incomes shown. Payees from Private Collect and CSA Collect

collection methods have similar median incomes but payers in Private Collect arrangements have significantly higher median child support incomes than those in CSA Collect arrangements. Payee Child Support Income and Taxable Income

amounts do not fully reflect the income available to these parents. For example, these incomes do not include untaxed income amounts such as some Centrelink benefits, or financial benefits associated with the possession of a Health Care Card. The CSA publication *Disposable Income Tables: Demonstrating Family Income Before and After Separation* takes into consideration some of these factors. For example, an intact family with a single taxable income of \$35,000 and two children aged between 5–12 years and 16–17 years actually has a disposable income of \$36,606 p.a. after tax has been deducted and Centrelink benefits added. After separation, the parent with full-time care of the children and not in paid employment, has an income of \$26,524 p.a., comprising \$12,069 in Parenting Payment Single, \$4,532 in Youth Allowance, \$1,885 in FTB Part A, \$2,084 in FTB Part B and a child support entitlement of \$5,954. By contrast, the payer parent with a taxable income of \$37,000 pays tax and \$5,954 in child support, leaving them with a disposable income of \$21,849 p.a.

4.6 Income Sources of CSA Payers Who Lodge Tax Returns

Table 4.13 shows the source of income for payers who lodged tax returns. It shows the numbers of payers who earned some or all of their income from these different sources. One payer may have earned income from a number of these sources.

The most common source of income for payers who lodged tax returns was salary and wages, with approximately 86 per cent of all payers deriving some or all of their income from this source. By comparison almost 17 per cent of payers who lodged tax returns received some or all of their income from Government benefits and allowances.

For those payers with an income the source with the highest average earnings was Salary and Wages (\$38,295) followed by Net Income or Loss from Business (\$21,618) and Partnerships and Trusts (\$18,421).

Table 4.13: Income Sources of CSA Payers Who Lodge Tax Returns, June 2004³

Top 10 Income Sources	Number	%	Average Earnings (\$)
Salary and Wages	344,008	86.2	38,295
Allowance, Director's Fees	98,083	24.6	2,420
Gross Interest	63,150	15.8	677
Government Benefits and Allowances	66,073	16.6	4,237
Net Income or Loss From Business	38,680	9.7	21,618
Dividends	47,689	12.0	3,212
Gross Rent	31,822	8.0	9,212
Partnerships and Trusts	24,267	6.1	18,421
Eligible Termination Payments	13,307	3.3	9,611
Lump Sum Payments	7,837	2.0	7,091
Total for CSA Payers¹	398,969		38,980²

Note: 1. This total differs from the sum of the main income sources because payers can earn income from more than one source.
 2. This is the average income for all payers who lodged a tax return. Therefore it is not the sum of the average incomes.
 3. The results in this table are derived from the Tax Return Data Base (TRDB) of the ATO and only include those CSA payers who lodged tax returns for the 2002–03 financial year. For this reason the number of payers in receipt of benefits is particularly affected and under reports the number of payers in receipt of government benefits.

5.0 Scheme Outcomes

5.1 Liabilities

The following liability statistics are broken down into CSA Collect and Private Collect categories.

5.1.1 Liabilities by CSA and Private Collect

Until 30 June 1999 payers were not required to pay child support if their liability calculated under the formula was less than \$260 per year. From 1 July 1999, however, a minimum liability of \$260 per year now applies to most parents.

There are a number of reasons why a parent is not required to pay child support, including the following:

- stage 1 court orders can have a clause that the payer will not have to pay child maintenance during periods of unemployment or in other circumstances;
- a Stage 1 payer can apply to CSA not to enforce the court order during periods of unemployment;
- where parents have an Agreement that the liability be nil; and
- where the parents equally share the care of their child and their incomes are also equal.

Table 5.1: Liability by Collection Method, June 2004

Liability	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Over \$260	180,044	52.6	241,491	65.8	421,535	59.4
\$260	115,131	33.6	72,631	19.8	187,762	26.5
\$1 to \$259	29,218	8.5	11,800	3.2	41,018	5.8
Nil	17,986	5.3	41,291	11.2	59,277	8.4
Total	342,379	100.0	367,213	100.0	709,592	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.
Note: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show the percentage of CSA Collect payers and Private Collect payers within specified liability ranges, while Chart 5.1 plots those percentages. The table and chart demonstrate that:

- a smaller proportion of CSA Collect cases have nil liabilities than Private Collect cases;
- a higher proportion of CSA Collect cases have \$260 minimum liabilities than Private Collect cases;
- a higher proportion of CSA Collect payers have liabilities under \$3,000; and
- a higher proportion of Private Collect payers have liabilities of between \$3,000 and \$14,000, which is in line with the data presented in Tables 4.9 and 4.10, indicating that payers' median incomes are significantly higher in Private Collect cases.

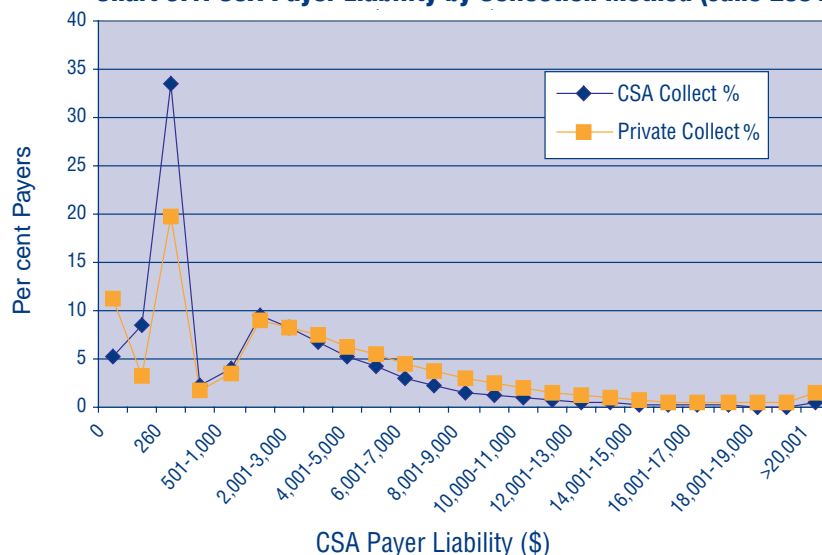
Table 5.2: Liability by Collection Method June 2004

Annual Payer Liability (\$)	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0	17,986	5.3	41,291	11.2	59,277	8.4
1-259	29,218	8.5	11,800	3.2	41,018	5.8
260	115,131	33.6	72,631	19.8	187,762	26.5
261-500	7,605	2.2	6,531	1.8	14,136	2.0
501-1,000	13,876	4.1	12,931	3.5	26,807	3.8
1,001-2,000	32,096	9.4	33,466	9.1	65,562	9.2
2,001-3,000	28,358	8.3	30,281	8.2	58,639	8.3
3,001-4,000	23,296	6.8	27,130	7.4	50,426	7.1
4,001-5,000	17,707	5.2	22,714	6.2	40,421	5.7
5,001-6,000	14,210	4.2	20,605	5.6	34,815	4.9
6,001-7,000	10,350	3.0	16,537	4.5	26,887	3.8
7,001-8,000	7,921	2.3	13,686	3.7	21,607	3.0
8,001-9,000	5,487	1.6	10,728	2.9	16,215	2.3
9,001-10,000	4,076	1.2	8,730	2.4	12,806	1.8
10,001-11,000	3,189	0.9	7,160	1.9	10,349	1.5
11,001-12,000	2,401	0.7	5,583	1.5	7,984	1.1
12,001-13,000	1,908	0.6	4,509	1.2	6,417	0.9
13,001-14,000	1,439	0.4	3,586	1.0	5,025	0.7
14,001-15,000	1,058	0.3	2,774	0.8	3,832	0.5
15,001-16,000	905	0.3	2,350	0.6	3,255	0.5
16,001-17,000	703	0.2	1,875	0.5	2,578	0.4
17,001-18,000	601	0.2	1,581	0.4	2,182	0.3
18,001-19,000	497	0.1	1,315	0.4	1,812	0.3
19,001-20,000	489	0.1	1,429	0.4	1,918	0.3
>20,001	1,872	0.5	5,990	1.6	7,862	1.1
Total	342,379	100.0	367,213	100.0	709,592	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Note: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Chart 5.1: CSA Payer Liability by Collection Method (June 2004)



5.1.2 Average Child Support Liabilities

Table 5.3 records the average annual child support for each Stage and Collection Method. There are two sets of averages: one set includes all cases and the other excludes cases where the assessment is \$260 a year or less. In Stage 2 cases, where liabilities of \$260 or less have been excluded, there is a difference of \$495.54 per year between the average Stage 2 Domestic liability (\$5,375.75 per year) and the average International

liability (\$4,880.21 per year). Where all cases have been included, the difference between the Stage 2 Domestic and Stage 2 International average liability figures is \$382.60 per year.

Table 5.4 outlines the total average weekly liability for Stage 2 CSA Collect and Private Collect cases based upon the number of eligible children. In almost all cases the average liabilities of the Private Collect cases are higher than the average liabilities for CSA Collect cases.

Stage	Collection Method	Average Annual Liabilities (all cases)			Average Annual Liabilities (Liability more than \$260)		
		Domestic \$	International \$	Total \$	Domestic \$	International \$	Total \$
Stage 1	CSA	2,668.15	5,230.49	2,893.33	2,683.49	5,125.56	2,902.73
	Private	2,404.63	5,483.06	2,504.19	2,516.42	5,606.69	2,616.91
	Total	2,582.40	5,266.70	2,771.70	2,629.09	5,193.54	2,813.45
Stage 2	CSA	2,568.07	2,897.74	2,580.08	4,552.75	4,734.49	4,560.01
	Private	4,455.92	3,848.61	4,448.08	5,952.92	5,211.32	5,943.52
	Total	3,532.49	3,149.89	3,523.09	5,375.75	4,880.21	5,363.80
All	CSA	2,570.54	3,039.02	2,588.24	4,466.56	4,774.67	4,479.62
	Private	4,432.21	3,896.06	4,425.17	5,897.59	5,227.55	5,888.87
	Total	3,515.36	3,260.82	3,508.89	5,296.93	4,906.77	5,286.96

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Eligible Children	CSA Collect		Private Collect		Total	
	Number	Average \$	Number	Average \$	Number	Average \$
1	196,766	39.24	176,630	60.73	373,396	49.41
2	87,862	64.65	104,787	110.53	192,649	89.60
3	23,400	72.90	31,006	131.12	54,406	106.08
4	5,223	66.44	7,292	119.41	12,515	97.30
5	1,101	48.83	1,582	103.32	2,683	80.96
6	313	52.97	382	92.88	695	74.91
7	94	38.96	95	63.73	189	51.41
8	25	53.66	29	51.25	54	52.37
Total²	314,790	49.34	321,811	85.30	636,601	67.52

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Note: 1. Nil liability cases have been excluded from this table.
2. Cases with more than 8 Eligible Children have been excluded from this table as the numbers are insignificant (14 cases have been excluded).

5.2 Payments

5.2.1 Total Credits and Liabilities

Table 5.5 shows total liabilities and all credits since 1988. As at June 1991 a total of \$283 million in liabilities had been registered for payers, and

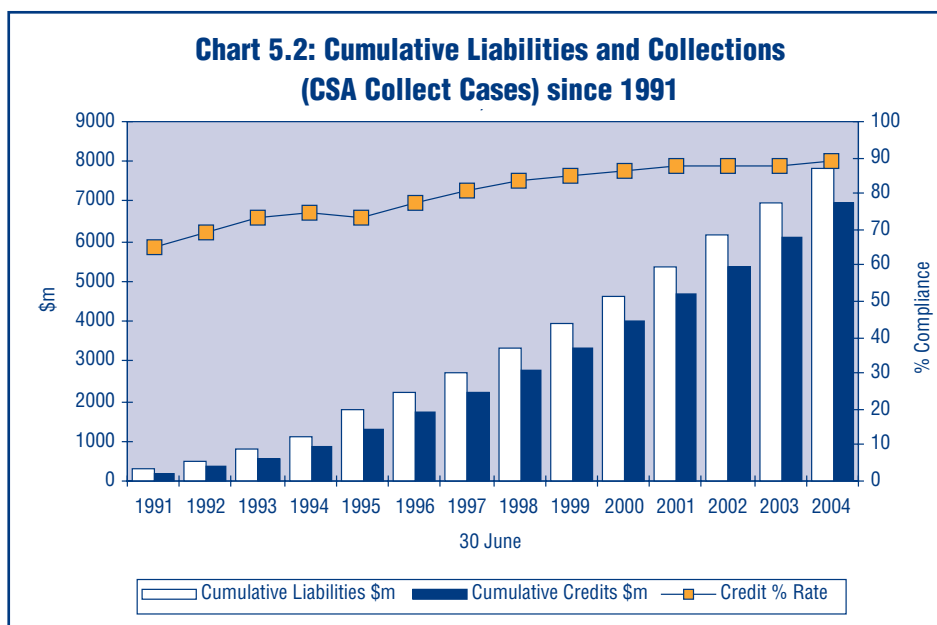
\$185 million had actually been collected. In other words CSA collections represented 65 per cent of all liabilities. By June 2004 CSA Collect cumulative liabilities had risen to \$7,818.0 million and cumulative credits were up to \$6,970.4 million. This resulted in an 89.2 per cent collection rate.

Table 5.5: Cumulative Credits and Liabilities for CSA Collect Cases, June 2004¹

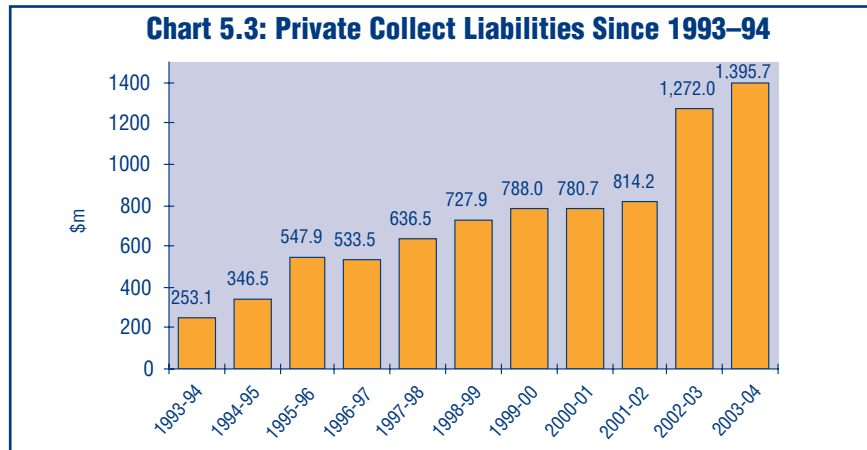
End June	Cumulative Liabilities \$m	Cumulative Credits \$m	Collection Rate %
1988–1991 ²	283.0	185.0	65.0
1988–1992	505.1	346.4	69.0
1988–1993	784.9	569.4	73.0
1988–1994	1,131.3	848.2	75.0
1988–1995	1,795.8	1,315.8	73.3
1988–1996	2,228.4	1,729.1	77.6
1988–1997	2,725.7	2,209.1	81.0
1988–1998	3,305.6	2,761.3	83.5
1988–1999	3,940.4	3,357.5	85.2
1988–2000	4,645.2	4,010.5	86.3
1988–2001	5,368.1	4,698.4	87.5
1988–2002	6,151.7	5,392.9	87.7
1988–2003	6,957.2	6,113.1	87.9
1988–2004	7,818.0	6,970.4	89.2

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. The difference between the "All Liabilities" figures and the "All Credits" figures are the Gross Maintenance Debt figures, not Net Maintenance Debt figures reported elsewhere in this publication. Net Maintenance Debt figures exclude Write Off amounts.
2. The 1991 credit and liability totals include amounts for 1988, 1989 and 1990.



Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.



Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004

Note: The large increase in liabilities in 2002–03 can be mainly attributed to more accurate reports on Private Collect liabilities due to the introduction of CSA's new computer system (CUBA).

The liabilities and collections in Table 5.5 are also depicted in Chart 5.2. Total liabilities are represented by the white bars, while the credits are recorded in the blue bars. Running across the top of the chart are the credit amounts as a percentage of all liabilities.

Chart 5.3 shows the total Private Collect liabilities for 1993–94 to 2003–04. The CSA assumes that the collection rate for privately collected child support is 100 per cent as payees are able to request collection by the CSA where the payer fails to meet their obligation.

5.2.2 Child Support Transferred

“Transfers” are child support liabilities that have

been collected by CSA (CSA Collect), as well as payments that have been paid directly between parents but where the eligible carers are registered with CSA (Private Collect arrangements). The total amount of child support transferred in 2003–04 was \$2,186.0 million, including \$1,395.7 million in private collections and \$790.5 million in funds collected by the CSA. This is a \$242.2 million (12.5 per cent) increase on the ‘transfers’ total of \$1,944.0 million reported in 2002–03 (see Table 5.6 and Chart 5.4).

94 per cent of all (Private Collect and CSA collect cases combined) child support has been transferred between parents. This is over \$15 billion since 1988.

Table 5.6: Transfers (\$m.)

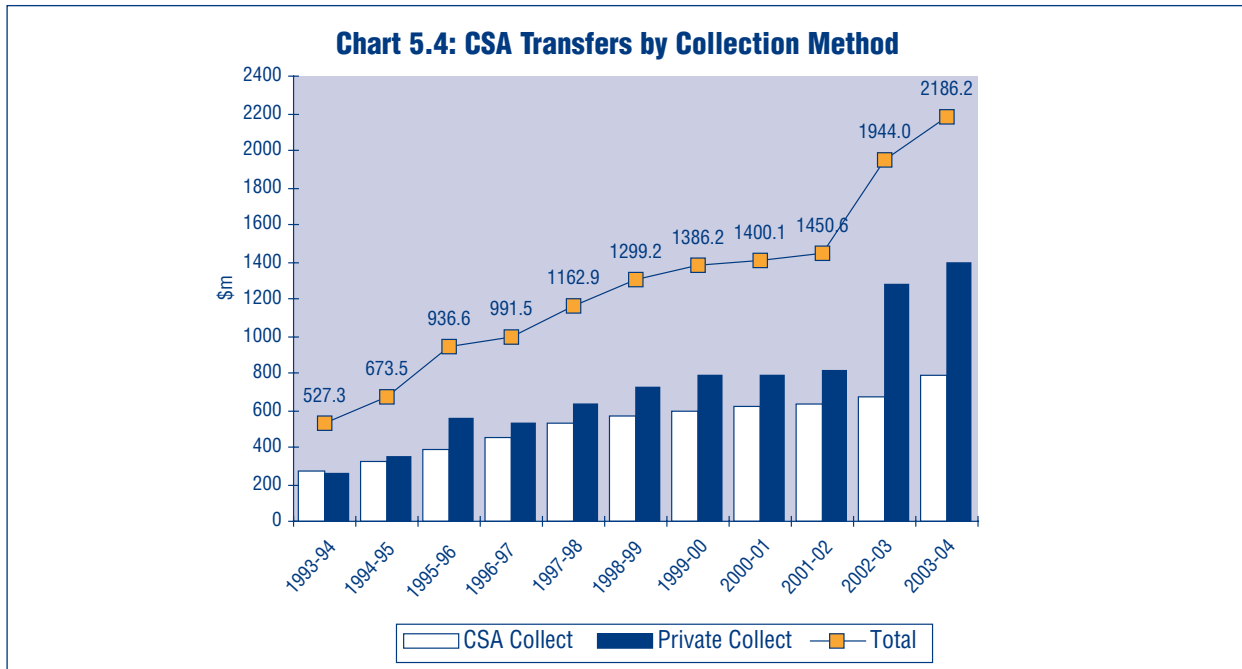
30 June	CSA Collect ¹		Private Collect ²		Total
	\$	%	\$	%	
1994	274.2	52.0	253.1	48.0	527.3
1995	327.0	48.6	346.5	51.4	673.5
1996	388.7	41.5	547.9	58.5	936.6
1997	458.0	46.2	533.5	53.8	991.5
1998	526.4	45.3	636.5	54.7	1,162.9
1999	571.3	44.0	727.9	56.0	1,299.2
2000	598.2	43.2	788.0	56.8	1,386.2
2001	619.4	44.2	780.7	55.8	1,400.1
2002	636.4	43.9	814.2	56.1	1,450.6
2003	672.0	34.6	1,272.0	65.4	1,944.0
2004	790.5	36.2	1,395.7	63.8	2,186.2

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. The CSA Collect figures include amounts for Interim Disbursement, Final Disbursement, Emergency Disbursement and Non-Agency Payments (NAPs).

2. Private Collect totals assume 100 per cent of privately paid child support is transferred. Where this is not so, the payee is entitled to ask the CSA to collect the liability.

3. The large increase in credits in 2002–03 can be mainly attributed to more accurate reports on Private Collect credits due to the introduction of CSA's new computer system (CUBA).



Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

5.2.3 Collections—CSA Collect Cases

Child support payments can be received by the CSA in a number of ways:

- **Employer Withholding:** these are monies withheld by the parent's employer and paid directly to CSA by the employer on the employee's behalf;
- **Cash:** monies paid by the parent directly to the CSA by cheque or money order;
- **Tax Refund Intercept Payments (TRIPs):** these are monies intercepted from a payers tax refund by CSA; or

- **Non-Agency Payments (NAPs):** these are payments made directly to the payee or a third party by the payer instead of to the CSA. These payments are made in lieu of child support and might include money or the payment of medical bills, school fees etc.

Table 5.7 and Chart 5.5 show that the Cash component, as a percentage of child support payments, is increasing while TRIPs are decreasing. The percentage amount collected through NAPs and Employer Withholding has been relatively stable.

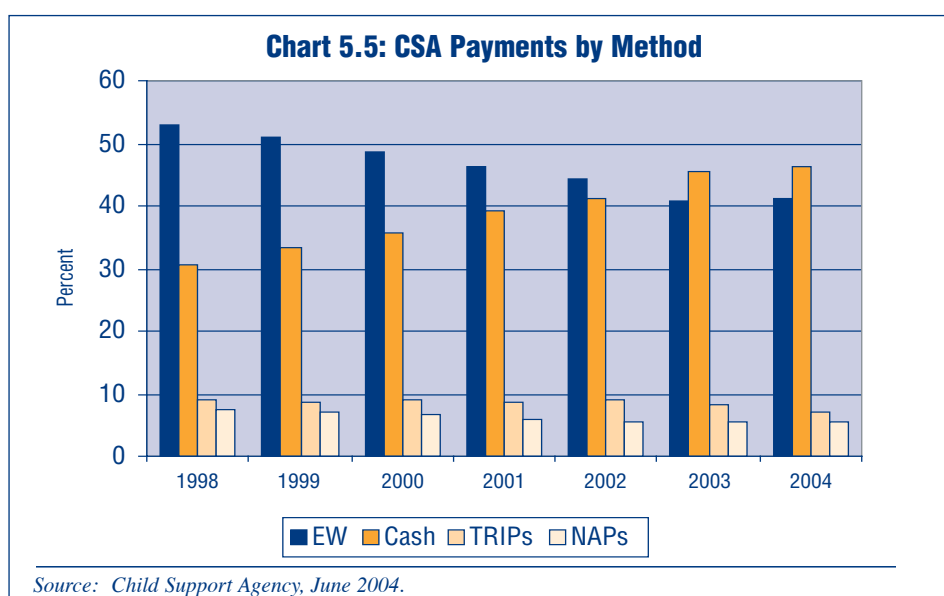
Table 5.7: Child Support Payments—Percentages

30 June	Employer Withholding	Cash ²	TRIPs	NAPs
1998	53.1	30.6	8.9	7.4
1999	51.1	33.4	8.5	6.9
2000	48.8	35.6	9.1	6.5
2001	46.4	39.2	8.8	5.7
2002 ¹	44.4	41.3	8.9	5.3
2003	40.9	45.4	8.2	5.4
2004	41.1	46.2	7.1	5.6

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. The data for 2001–02 relates to the period up to the end February 2002. Data was not available for the remainder of the financial year due to the redevelopment of the CSA's computer system (CUBA).

2. Cash in this table includes cheques, Australia Post Billpay, BPay, and s72A enforcement payments.



5.2.4 Liabilities and Debt—CSA Collect Cases

Table 5.8 shows the number of payers in each income range by the size of gross maintenance debt (GMD) attributable to both current liability cases and ended cases. The table shows that only 2.9 per cent of payers have a maintenance debt greater than \$10,000. The debt associated with these payers, however, comprises 49.0 per cent of the total debt. Of equal note is the \$331.8 million (or 39.1 per cent) of debt associated with payers who have incomes of \$12,000 or less.

While 64.7 per cent of domestic cases in Table 5.9 have no debt only 32.3 per cent of international cases have no debt. Only 2.6 per cent of domestic cases have debts of over \$10,000 but 12.9 per cent of international cases have debts of over \$10,000.

Table 5.10 shows that 51.4 per cent of domestic payers with debt were in the \$0–\$12,000 income range, and their debt accounted for 37.3 per cent of the domestic gross maintenance debt. This compares with 56.4 per cent of international payers with debt who have incomes of \$12,000 or less and account for 54.1 per cent of the gross maintenance debt associated with all international cases. Approximately 5.2 per cent of domestic payers with debt had incomes of \$50,000 or higher, and they accounted for 8.0 per cent of the gross maintenance debt associated with domestic cases. About 5.6 per cent of international payers with debt had incomes of \$50,000 and over, and accounted for 10.9 per cent of the international gross maintenance debt.

Table 5.8: Payer Gross Maintenance Debt by Payer Child Support Income, June 2004
(including CSA Collect and Private Collect cases that have ended with arrears)

Maint. Debt (\$)	Payer Child Support Income										Total	
	\$0–12,000		\$12–20,000		\$20–50,000		\$50,000+		No.	No. %	Sum \$m	Sum %
0	129,773	0.0	51,453	0.0	212,770	0.0	81,896	0.0	475,892	63.8	0.0	0.0
1–260	48,632	4.4	8,541	0.8	15,318	1.6	2,933	0.3	75,424	10.1	7.1	0.8
261–500	16,990	6.3	3,267	1.2	7,250	2.7	1,280	0.5	28,787	3.9	10.7	1.3
501–1K	20,403	14.7	4,046	2.9	10,146	7.4	1,768	1.3	36,363	4.9	26.4	3.1
1,001–2K	16,964	23.9	4,166	6.0	12,090	17.5	1,980	2.9	35,200	4.7	50.4	5.9
2,001–5K	18,824	60.8	5,569	18.2	18,316	60.2	2,557	8.3	45,266	6.1	147.6	17.4
5,001–10K	10,061	70.6	3,175	22.4	12,038	85.8	1,613	11.6	26,887	3.6	190.4	22.5
10,000+	7,511	151.0	2,308	42.5	9,824	175.5	2,054	46.1	21,697	2.9	415.1	49.0
Total	269,158	331.8	82,525	94.1	297,752	350.7	96,081	70.9	745,516	100.0	847.6	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Note: This table records Gross Maintenance Debt associated with all CSA cases, both active cases and those that have ended with arrears.

Totals may not add due to rounding.

Table 5.9: Payer Gross Maintenance Debt, June 2004

(Including CSA Collect and Private Collect cases that have ended with arrears)

Debt (\$)	Payer Location									
	Domestic			International			Total			
	No.	No. %	Sum \$m	No.	No. %	Sum \$m	No.	No.%	Sum \$m	Sum %
0	469,311	64.7	0.0	6,581	32.3	0.0	475,892	63.8	0.0	0.0
1–260	73,463	10.1	6.9	1,961	9.6	0.2	75,424	10.1	7.1	0.8
261–500	27,522	3.8	10.3	1,265	6.2	0.5	28,787	3.9	10.7	1.3
501–1K	34,268	4.7	24.8	2,095	10.3	1.5	36,363	4.9	26.4	3.1
1,001–2K	33,779	4.7	48.3	1,421	7.0	2.0	35,200	4.7	50.4	5.9
2,001–5K	42,729	5.9	139.0	2,537	12.5	8.5	45,266	6.1	147.6	17.4
5,001–10K	25,007	3.4	176.9	1,880	9.2	13.5	26,887	3.6	190.4	22.5
10,000+	19,062	2.6	346.0	2,635	12.9	69.0	21,697	2.9	415.1	49.0
Total	725,141	100.0	752.3	20,375	100.0	95.3	745,516	100.0	847.6	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Note: This table records Gross Maintenance Debt associated with all CSA cases, both active and those that have ended with arrears. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Table 5.10: Payer Gross Maintenance Debt for Payers with Debt only, June 2004

(Including CSA Collect and Private Collect cases that have ended with arrears)

Total Payer Income (\$)	Payer Location											
	No.	Domestic		International		Total		No.	Total		Total	
		No. %	Sum \$m	Sum %	No.	No. %	Sum \$m	Sum %	No.	No. %	Sum \$m	Sum %
0–12K	131,606	51.4	280.3	37.3	7,779	56.4	51.6	54.1	139,385	51.7	331.8	39.1
12K–20K	30,041	11.7	89.0	11.8	1,031	7.5	5.1	5.4	31,072	11.5	94.1	11.1
20K–50K	80,766	31.6	322.6	42.9	4,216	30.6	28.2	29.6	84,982	31.5	350.7	41.4
50,000+	13,417	5.2	60.5	8.0	768	5.6	10.4	10.9	14,185	5.3	70.9	8.4
Total	255,830	100.0	752.3	100.0	13,794	100.0	95.3	100.0	269,624	100.0	847.6	100.0

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Note: This table records Gross Maintenance Debt associated with all CSA cases, both active and those that have ended with arrears. Totals may not add due to rounding.

5.2.5 Debt—CSA Collect Cases

Table 5.11 and Chart 5.6 record Scheme arrears amounts as at the end of the past eight financial years. Column A in Table 5.11 records Cumulative Net Maintenance Debt (NMD). Column B records write-off amounts (debt deemed to be currently uncollectible) while Column C reports Cumulative Gross Maintenance Debt (GMD), which is calculated by adding NMD and write-off together. Cumulative GMD associated with overseas cases is recorded in Column E, while Column F

expresses the Cumulative GMD associated with overseas cases as a percentage of all GMD.

CSA research indicates that GMD has been increasing over recent years as a result of three key factors: the dramatic increase in the number of overseas cases that have come to Australia with large debts; the increase in debt associated with cases that have a \$260 p.a. minimum liability; and because of the rate of growth in the total caseload, including ended cases with debt.

Total gross maintenance debt has increased by \$3.5 million (0.4 per cent) between June 2003 and June 2004. This compares with the increase of \$85.4 million (11.3 per cent) in the previous financial year. Domestic debt has decreased by

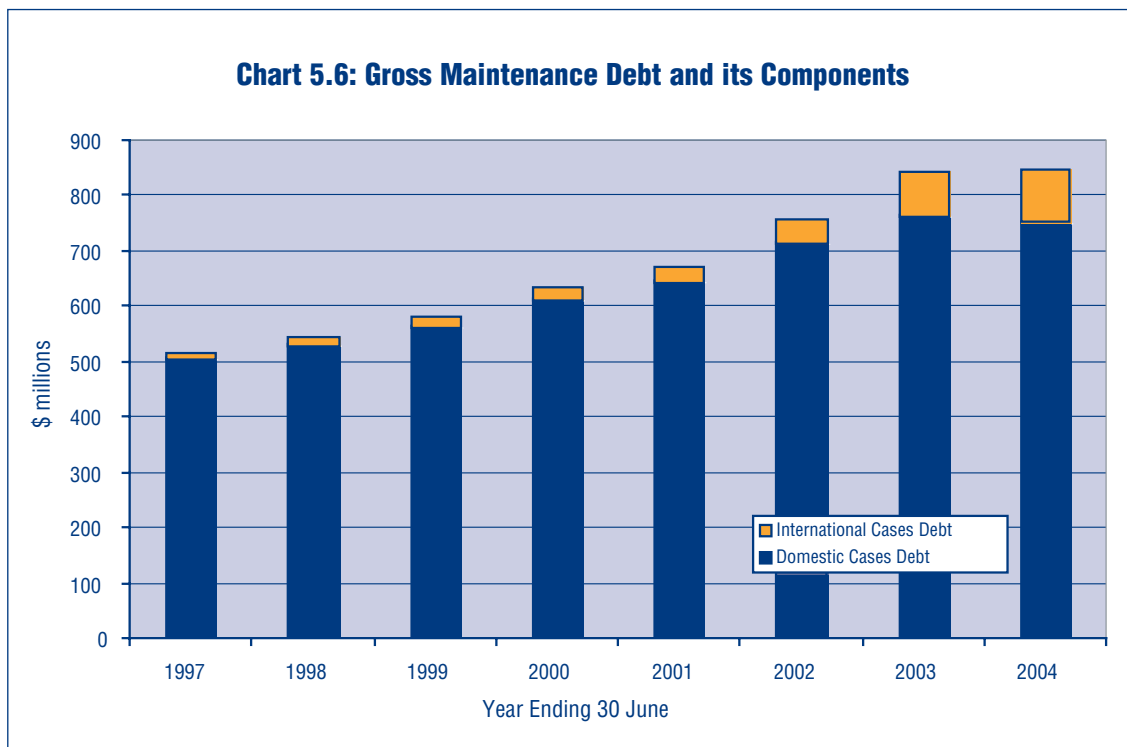
\$13.1 million from \$765.4 million at June 2003 to \$752.3 million at June 2004. At the same time international debt has increased by \$16.6 million (21.1 per cent) from \$78.7 million to \$95.3 million.

Table 5.11: Child Support Gross Maintenance Debt and its Components

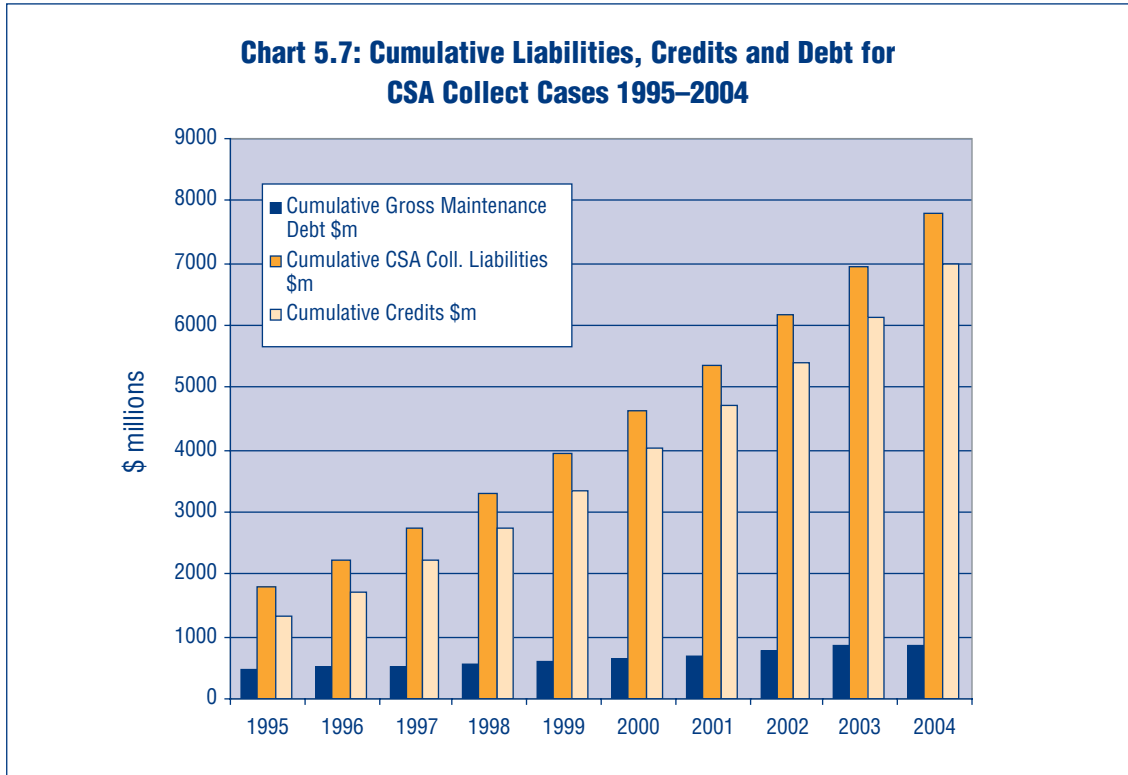
30 June	A. Cumulative Net Maintenance Debt (\$m.)	B. Write-Off (\$m.)	C. Cumulative Gross Maintenance Debt (GMD) (\$m.)	D. Cumulative GMD on Domestic Cases (\$m.)	E. Cumulative GMD on Overseas Cases (\$m.) Total GMD	F. Cumulative GMD on Overseas Cases as % of
1997	458.4	58.2	516.6	506.7	9.9	1.9
1998	450.3	94.0	544.3	532.2	12.1	2.2
1999	455.6	127.2	582.8	564.2	18.6	3.2
2000	542.6	92.2	634.7	613.8	20.9	3.3
2001	595.9	73.7	669.7	645.8	23.9	3.6
2002	673.7	85.1	758.7	714.2	44.5	5.9
2003	762.0	82.1	844.1	765.4	78.7	9.3
2004	763.1	84.5	847.6	752.3	95.3	11.2

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004

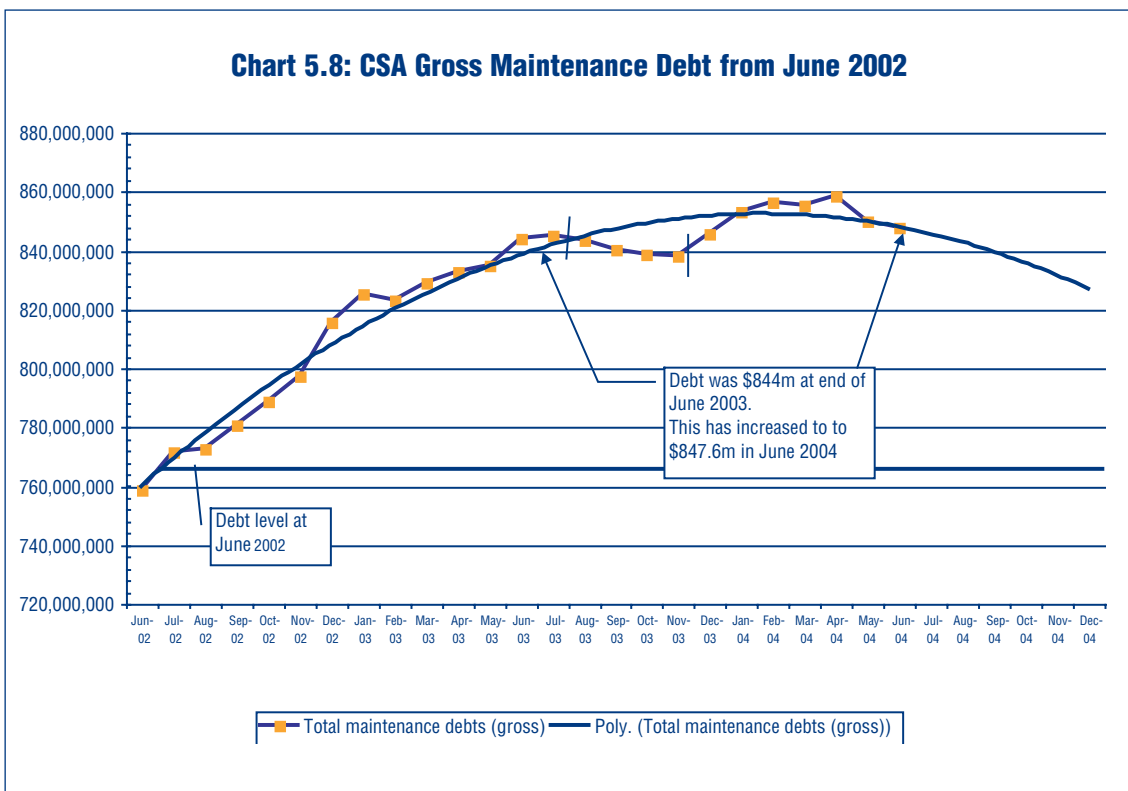
Chart 5.6: Gross Maintenance Debt and its Components



Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.



Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.



Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Chart 5.8 shows a decline in the overall growth rate in gross maintenance debt in 2003–04 compared with 2002–03. This confirms that the Child Support Agency’s debt reduction strategies are clearly working. The annual increase in debt to June 2003 was \$85.4m while the annual increase to June 2004 was only \$3.5m. Of particular note has been the reduction in domestic debt in 2003–04.

6.0 Legal Services Overview

6.1 Background

The Child Support Scheme Legal Services Program is a national Commonwealth program designed to help disadvantaged parents who receive or who are seeking child support and parents who pay child support understand their rights and responsibilities under the Child Support Scheme (the scheme).

The scheme aims to provide information, legal advice, minor assistance, and, when appropriate, legal representation to low income parents (particularly Department of Family and Community Services customers) to ensure that children with separated parents benefit from the Child Support Scheme. The scheme also aims to secure an appropriate level of financial support for separated parents with children

Legal Aid Commissions in each State and Territory, and thirteen specialist Community Legal Services located throughout Australia, provide services to parents eligible to receive child support and parents responsible for paying child support.

The following broad activities are undertaken by legal services on behalf of carer parents:

- assistance in preparing and completing legal documents;
- obtaining court orders;
- advising self-representing clients about what is involved in attending court;

- assistance with establishing proof of parentage;
- assisting clients interpret child support documents from other government bodies;
- assisting stage 2 clients understand the change of assessment process; and
- court representation as appropriate.

In addition to the above activities for carer parents, a number of broad activities are undertaken on behalf of liable parents including:

- assisting clients understand their rights of appeal under the change of assessment arrangements;
- assisting clients interpret their child support obligations;
- assisting with preparing and completing legal documents;
- advising self-representing clients about what is involved in attending court;
- court representation as appropriate.

The Child Support Agency also actively supports clients by liaising directly with the legal service providers to resolve child support issues. The Child Support Agency also refers clients to independent legal services as appropriate, to ensure that clients are fully informed and have access to legal advice and information.

Legal aid commissions expend funds on child support matters in accordance with Commonwealth priorities and guidelines.

The legal aid agreements for 2000–01 to 2003–04 incorporate an outputs-based reporting framework which identifies expenditure on particular categories of service delivery, including child support. The legal aid agreements require legal aid commissions to report performance information on a quarterly basis. The report addresses financial performance, service delivery, quarterly performance data, including actual performance against budget and estimated workload for each service output.

In addition, provisions in the agreement require legal aid commissions to provide statistical information on a monthly basis.

The Department meets with each commission 3 times per year to discuss performance. Monitoring of performance will be undertaken on an ongoing basis through the examination of information and data provided by commissions in accordance with the agreements.

Commonwealth funding for child support matters is also administered through the Community Legal Services Program to thirteen centres in Australia who provide specialist child support legal services to clients. In the 2003–04 financial year, the total allocation was \$1,341,235.

6.2 Statistics and Advice Work Types

6.2.1 Community Legal Services Statistics

During 2003–04, community legal centres reported to the Commonwealth using a new data collection

system, CLSIS (Community Legal Services Information System). No data can be provided at this time. It is anticipated that complete data will be available in 2004–05

7.0 Savings and Costs

7.1 Savings

Savings to Government outlays are achieved as a result of the application of the maintenance income test to payments of more than base rate Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A. As at June 2004, payments of more than the base rate Family Tax Benefit Part A are reduced by 50 cents for each dollar of maintenance received above \$1,150 per annum for a parent with one child from a previous relationship. The threshold is increased where there are additional children or if there is a couple with both partners receiving maintenance.

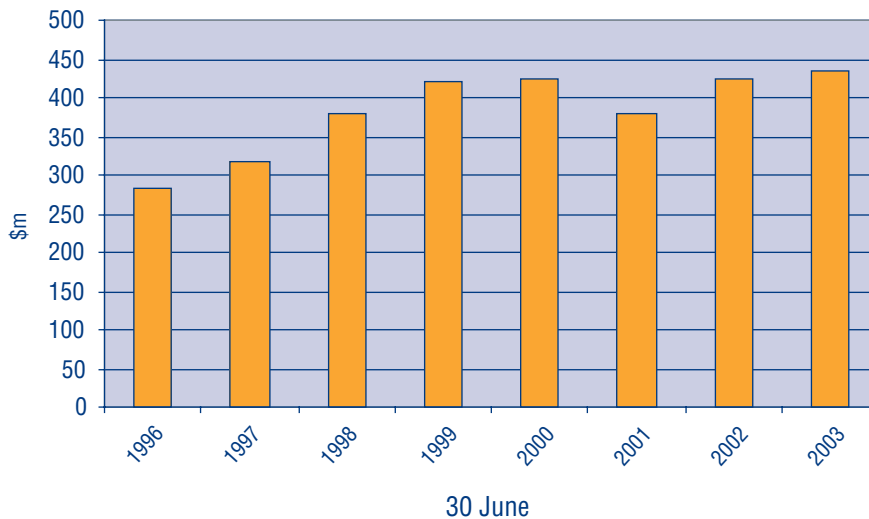
Table 7.1: Total Savings Assigned to the Child Support Scheme

1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
283	318	378.3	419.2	425.0 ¹	380.4	423.0	433.5

Source: Department of Family and Community Services, June 2003.

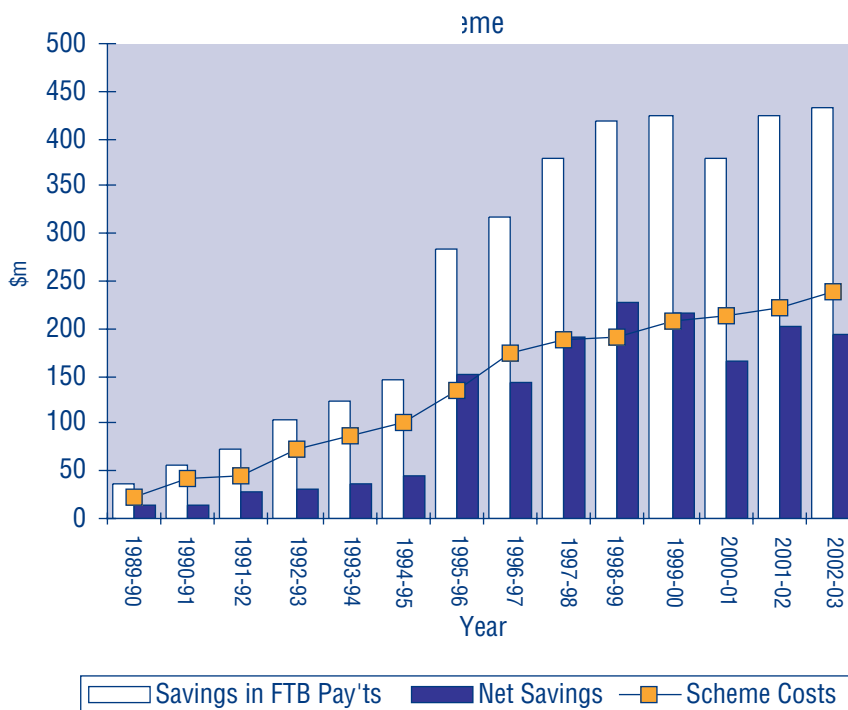
Notes: 1. This figure was revised from the \$594.4m reported by FaCS in July 2000.

Chart 7.1: Total Savings Attributable to the Child Support Scheme



Source: Department of Family and Community Services, June 2003.

Chart 7.2: Savings and Costs of the Child Support Scheme



Source: Child Support Agency Monthly Performance Report (CS5), CSA, June 2003.

7.2 Scheme Costs

Table 7.2: Savings and Costs of the Child Support Scheme^{1,2,3}

Agency/Dept	95-96 \$m	96-97 \$m	97-98 \$m	98-99 \$m	99-2000 \$m	2000-01 \$m	2001-02 \$m	2002-03 \$m
CSA	114.8	160.6	169.7	108.1	198.2	203.7	214.0	233.2
FaCS	12.4	8.6	10.4	2.7⁴	3.0	2.3	2.3	1.4
AGD	4.3	4.7	7.5	7.8	7.8	7.8	5.3⁵	5.5⁵
Scheme Costs	131.6	173.9	187.7	190.6	209.0	213.8	221.6	240.1
Savings in FaCS pay't	283	318	378	419	425	380	423	433.5
Net Savings⁶	151	144	191	228	216	166	201	193

Source: Child Support Agency, Department of Family and Community Services and Attorney-General's Department.

Notes: 1. The 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 CSA costs figures are not directly comparable with the 1995-96 figure of \$114.85 million. The later figures are accrued cost estimates which include, for example, all CSA costs for salaries, administrative costs, leave, IT redevelopment, internal user charges (IUCs) etc.

2. The 1999-2000 savings attributable to the Child Support Scheme are not comparable with data for earlier years. The increase in savings reflects steps taken by Centrelink to streamline the process for private collection customers.

3. Attorney-General's Department 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 costs for its responsibilities within the Child Support Scheme are not comparable with data for earlier years. The 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 figures are the actual amounts that A-G's spent administering its child support work: earlier figures are amounts that were allocated by the Department of Finance for those CSS responsibilities.

4. With the creation of the Department of Family and Community Services in the 1998-99 year and the establishment of Centrelink as an entity separate to FaCS, a decision was taken by FaCS to remove Centrelink costs in relation to the Child Support Scheme.

5. Expenditure by Legal Aid Commissions on Commonwealth matters is undertaken by Commissions in accordance with Commonwealth legal aid priorities. As such the Attorney-General's Department does not set funding levels to be expended by Legal Aid Commissions on particular areas of law. In 2002-03, Legal Aid Commissions (excluding Tasmania, ACT and NT) expended \$4.169 million on child support representation. Expenditure excludes resources dedicated to the provision of advice/information for child support matters. In addition, Community Legal Centres expended \$1.303 million on the provision of services for child support matters.

6. Net Savings equals Net Savings to Government outlays minus Scheme Costs.

7.3 Comparisons with Overseas Agencies

The Australian Child Support Agency has conducted preliminary research into how broad cost-effectiveness indicators of the Australian Child Support Scheme compare with other child support organisations.

The reader should note that these figures have not been standardised using agreed definitions, although an international project is continuing to develop such

standards between the Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and UK child support organisations. Given the lack of standardisation between the information for each jurisdiction, close comparisons between these data are inadvisable. Surveyed agencies define collections in different ways.⁷

7.4 CSA Staff

Table 7.4 records staffing levels for CSA at June 2004. The table also notes the gender breakdown by classification levels.

Table 7.3: Comparative Statistics for Australian and Overseas Child Support Programs (1998–99)^{1,2}

Country		Total A\$m. Collected or Transferred	Program Costs A\$m.	A\$ Collected for each \$1 Spent	Cost of Collecting \$1	Caseload	Agency Staff Numbers (FTEs)	Cost A\$ per Agency FTE	Arrears A\$
Australia	1997–98	1,162.9	169.7	6.85	14.6 cents	494,534	2,587	65,597	450.3
	1998–99	1,299.2	180.1	7.21	13.9 cents	535,569	2,663	67,634	455.6
	1999–00	1,386.2	198.2	6.99	14.3 cents	569,710	2,714	75,055	542.6
Canada ³	1998–99	1,225.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	389,273	1,590	62,830	1,746.6
New Zealand	1997–98	153.2	33.7	4.55	22.0 cents	131,750	509	66,220	224.9
	1998–99	160.2	36.4	4.40	22.7 cents	132,500	475	76,571	259.1
United Kingdom	1998–99	1,686.7	589.3	2.86	35.0 cents	923,960	9,299	63,372	n/a
United States ⁴	1996–97	22,673.9	5,815.8	3.90	25.6 cents	19,057,164	52,483	110,987	75,703.8
	1997–98	24,342.9	6,082.4	4.00	25.0 cents	19,419,449	56,212	n/a	n/a

Notes: 1. Currency amounts in this table are A\$ and were converted using the exchange rate quoted in *The Australian Financial Review*, 7 July 2000. These topline results do not necessarily reflect different policy aims and administrative arrangements between agencies.

2. Australian staff numbers in this table are Average Staffing Level (ASL). There was also a small number of FaCS staff dedicated to the Child Support Scheme, and a small number of staff in the Attorney-General's Department who had child support responsibilities.

Table 7.4: CSA Total Staff by Gender and Classifications, June 2004^{1, 2, 3}

	Male	%	Female	%	Total Staff
CSO 1–6	733	26.9	1,995	73.1	2,728
EL1–2	78	38.9	123	61.1	202
SES	6	54.5	5	45.5	11
Total	817	27.8	2,124	72.2	2,941

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2004.

Notes: 1. Numbers are Actual Full Time Equivalents (FTE) which include staff on unpaid leave. Unpaid categories include staff who are on leave without pay, unpaid maternity leave, and compensation.

2. Staff on Higher Duties Allowance (HDA) are recorded at HDA level rather than their nominal classification.

3. The bulk of Scheme staff are employed by the CSA. There is also a small number of staff employed in other areas of FaCS, and the Attorney-General's Department, both of which also have administrative responsibilities under the Child Support Scheme.

Percentages may not add due to rounding.

⁷ The reader is referred to the paper *Child Support Schemes: Australia and Comparisons*, Client Research Unit, Child Support Agency, March 2001.

At the end of June 2004 there were 2,941 FTE staff in the CSA. Of that number 2,124 were female (72 per cent) and 817 were male (28 per cent). At levels Child Support Officer (CSO) 1–6 (and equivalents) 73 per cent of all officers were female but at the Senior Executive Staff levels males accounted for 55 per cent of CSA staff.

7.5 CSA Telephone Performance

Research has established that CSA clients prefer communicating by telephone. Recognising this fact, the CSA has allocated considerable time and funding to improving its telephone system. This effort is reflected in the telephone performance statistics in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5: CSA Telephone Statistics

End June	Main Queue ¹ (calls per day)	Response Time ²	IVR Calls per day ³	Total Phone Traffic (queue and IVR total) ⁴
1994	5,000	n/a	n/a	5,000
1995	9,000	80% in 3 mins	n/a	9,000
1996	6,000	80% in 2 mins	n/a	6,000
1997	8,000	90% in 2 mins	2,308	10,300
1998	8,500	93.3% in 2 mins 83.5% in 30 secs	4,154	12,700
1999	8,500	86% in 2 mins	4,681	13,200
2000	8,450	87% in 2 mins	6,287	14,700
2001	9,371	95.5% in 2 mins	5,753	15,124
2002	8,679	88.5% in 2 mins 79.3% in 30 secs	5,177	13,856
2003	9,332	93.8% in 2 mins 85.3% in 30 secs	6,499	15,831
2004	8,763	97.3% in 2 mins 91.3% in 30 secs	7,295	16,058

Source: CSA, as at 30 June for the years in question.

Notes: 1. Main Queue includes public calls, which have been logged on to the CSA phone system. The total excludes Change of Assessment (COA) and Complaints calls.

2. Response time is calculated on calls logged in to the Main Queue.

3. IVR (Interactive Voice Response) was introduced by the CSA during 1995–96. An IVR traffic figure for that year is not available. The calls to the Main Queue decreased during that year as a result of the introduction of the IVR. IVR calls are counted on a monthly basis given that the system operates 7 days per week. In this instance, however, calls have been calculated on a daily basis using the following method. In 2000–01 there were 113,159 IVR calls per month or 1.5 million for the year. This figure was then divided by 260, which is the number of days in a working year, to produce the result of 5,753. This makes the IVR calls per day consistent with the way the calls per day are measured for the Main Queue.

4. The totals in this column include all Main Queue calls and IVR calls calculated on a daily basis using the method described in note 3 above.

APPENDIX 1: Contact Details

Parents are able to obtain information from the Child Support Agency, Centrelink and legal service providers on the following numbers.

Child Support Agency

- General Enquiries **Phone 13 1272**
- CSA Info Service (IVR automated service for quick account enquiries and general information) **Phone 13 1107**
- Child Support Change of Assessment **Phone 13 1141**
- CSA Complaints **Phone 13 2919**
- Web site **www.csa.gov.au**

Centrelink

Services

- Appointments **13 1021**
- Self-Service **13 6240**
- Customer Relations **Freecall™1800 050 004**
- Centrelink Multilingual Call **13 1202**
- TTY **Freecall™1800 810 586**
- TTY Customer Relations **Freecall™1800 000 567**

Programs

- Employment Services **13 2850**
- Retirement Services **13 2300**
- Disability, Sickness and Carers **13 2717**
- Family Assistance Office **13 6150**
- Youth and Student Services **13 2490**
- ABSTUDY **13 2317**
- Centrelink website **www.centrelink.gov.au**
- Family Assistance Office website **www.familyassist.gov.au**

Family Court of Australia

- Website: www.familycourt.gov.au
- Adelaide **08 8205 2666**
- Brisbane **07 3248 2200**
- Canberra **02 6267 0511**
- Dandenong **03 9767 6200**
- Darwin **08 8981 1488**
- Hobart **03 6232 1725**
- Melbourne **03 8600 3777**
- Newcastle **02 4926 1255**
- Parramatta **02 9893 5555**
- Sydney **02 9217 7111**
- Townsville **07 4722 9333**
- Family Court of Western Australia **08 9224 8222**

Federal Magistrates Service

- Ph: **1300 367 110**
- Website: www.fms.gov.au

Other Support Services

Family Relationship Services

- Centacare: **1300 138 070**
- Family Services Australia: **1300 365 859**
- Relationships Australia: **1300 364 277**
- Telephone Interpreting Service: **13 14 50**
- Lifeline **13 11 14**
- Mensline Australia **1300 789 978**
- Kids Helpline **1800 789 978**

Financial counselling services are available in each state:

- NSW **1800 808 488**
- Vic **03 9614 5433**
- Qld **07 3257 1957**
- SA **08 8202 5182**
- Tas **03 6223 4595**
- WA **08 9221 9411**
- ACT **02 6257 1788**
- NT **08 8932 6111**

Family Law Hotline: **1800 050 321 (Toll free information line).**

Carer Parent Services

Child Support Scheme

If you require assistance to understand your rights and responsibilities under the Child Support Scheme, a number of Legal Aid related agencies throughout Australia provide specialised independent services. For more information or advice about how the Scheme applies to you, please contact one of the services listed below.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Legal Aid Office (ACT)

Phone: (02) 6243 3411

Advice Line: 1300 654 314

NEW SOUTH WALES

Legal Aid Commission of NSW

Phone: (02) 9744 3833

Phone: 1800 451 784 Toll Free

Macarthur Legal Centre

Phone: (02) 4628 2042

Illawarra Legal Centre Inc.

Phone: (02) 4276 1939

Southwest Sydney Legal Centre

Phone: (02) 9601 7777

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Legal Service Commission of South Australia

Child Support Section

Phone: (08) 8463 3576

1300 366 424

Southern Community Justice Centre

Phone: (08) 8384 5222

Westside Community Lawyers

Phone: (08) 8243 5521

Para District Legal Service

Phone: (08) 8281 6911

TASMANIA*

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania

Hobart

Phone: (03) 6233 8383

Launceston

Phone: (03) 6336 2050

Hobart Community Legal Service

Phone: (03) 6223 2500

* Carer parents in the south of the state should contact the Hobart Community Legal Service. Carers in the north and northwest of the state should contact the Legal Aid Commission.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

Family Law Advice Sessions

Phone: (08) 8999 3000

Advice Line

Phone: 1800 019 343

QUEENSLAND

Legal Aid Queensland

Child Support Unit

Phone: 1300 651 188 (Toll Free)

Fax: (07) 3238 3545

Caxton Legal Centre Inc.

Phone: (07) 3254 1811

VICTORIA

Victoria Legal Aid

Phone: (03) 9269 0408

1800 677 402

Peninsula Community Legal Centre Inc.

Phone: (03) 9783 3600

Geelong Community Legal Service Inc.

Phone: (03) 5229 0775

Springvale Monash Legal Service

Phone: (03) 9562 3144

Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau Inc.

Phone: (03) 9546 5255

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Legal Aid Western Australia

Child Support Legal Unit

Carer parents

Phone: (08) 9261 6253

1300 650 579

Bunbury Community Legal Centre

Phone: (08) 9791 3206

Gosnells Community Centre

Phone (08) 9398 1455

Liabile Parent Services

Child Support Scheme

If you require assistance to understand your rights and responsibilities under the Child Support Scheme, a number of Legal Aid related agencies throughout Australia provide specialised independent services. These services may be able to assist you to purchase a self-help kit, attend an information session or receive telephone information and/or advice. For more information or advice about how the Scheme applies to you, please contact one of the services listed below.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Legal Aid Office (ACT)

Phone: (02) 6243 3411
Advice Line: 1300 654 314

NEW SOUTH WALES

Legal Aid Commission of NSW Child Support Service

Phone: (02) 9744 3833
1800 451 784 Toll-Free

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Legal Services Commission of South Australia
Child Support Section

Phone: (08) 8463 3576
1300 366 424

Southern Community Justice Centre

Phone: (08) 8384 5222

Westside Community Lawyers

Phone: (08) 8243 5521

TASMANIA

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania Child Support Information Sessions
Launceston Office

Phone: (03) 6336 2050

Hobart Office

Phone: (03) 6233 8383

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Legal Aid Western Australia
Child Support Legal Unit
Liabile Parent Forums

Phone: (08) 9261 6318
Phone: 1800 199 363

Bunbury Community Legal Centre

Phone: (08) 9791 3206

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission
Family Law Advice Sessions

Phone: (08) 8999 3000
1800 019 343

QUEENSLAND

Legal Aid Queensland Child Support Unit
(Liabile Parent Project)

Phone: 1300 651 188 Toll-Free
Fax: (07) 3238 3545

Caxton Legal Centre

Phone: (07) 3254 1811

VICTORIA

Victoria Legal Aid
Liabile Parents Information Service

Phone: (03) 9269 0408
1800 677 402

Peninsula Community Legal Service

Phone: (03) 9783 3600
1800 064 784 (0359 area only)

Geelong Community Legal Service
Liabile Parent Child Support Worker

Phone: (03) 5221 4744

Springvale Legal Service

Phone: (03) 9562 3144

Springvale Monash Community Aid and Advice Bureau

Phone: (03) 9546 5255

Amounts Used in Child Support Assessments

Child Support Year

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Liabe Parent's exempted income amount									
Single yearly rate of pension (no relevant dependents)	8,733	9,006	9,043	10,219	10,482	11,271	11,740	12,315	12,950
Twice married pension rate (with relevant dependents)	14,570	15,023	15,085	17,051	17,498	18,813	19,597	20,557	21,622
Additional amount for child under 13 at end of child support year	1,830	1,888	1,895	1,958	2,018	2,049	2,169	2,235	2,307
Additional amount for child 13-15 at end of child support year	2,558	2,639	2,649	2,733	2,813	2,857	3,025	3,119	3,219
Additional amount for child 16 or over at end of child support year	3,643	3,756	3,771	3,875	3,977	4,276	4,454	4,672	4,914

Source: Social Security Act 1991

Resident Parents disregarded income amount

Yearly equivalent of average weekly earnings	36,130	37,424	38,787	31,351	31,699	33,717	35,012	36,213	38,168
Additional amount for first child under 6 as at start of c.s. year	4,155	4,304	4,461	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Additional amount for each other child under 6 as at start of c.s. year	903	936	970	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Additional amount for child 6 or over and under 12 as at start of c.s. year	1,807	1,871	1,939	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Other amounts

Yearly equivalent of 2.5 times AWE	90,325	93,560	96,968	101,153	103,103	108,732	113,542	119,470	126,659
Inflation factor	1.040	1.045	1.040	1.040	1.0375	1.0375	1.0375	1.0375	1.0400
Weekly Protected Earnings Rate (for the period 1 Jan. to 31 Dec.)	210.15	216.68	217.58	218.85	221.03	237.3	246.68	253.58	260.48

Notes 1. The values recorded for the years 1994-95 to 1998-99 cover financial years i.e. 1 July to 30 June for those years.

2. The 1999 values apply to the period 1 July 1999 to 31 December 1999.

3. The 2000-2004 values are for the calendar years-1 January to 31 December.

