



Australian Government
Child Support Agency

Facts and Figures



Comments on this paper

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Child Support Scheme—Key facts and figures

	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
Support for children			
Child Support transfers			
CSA collect	\$866.4m	\$932.3m	\$976.5m
Private collect ¹	\$1,513.4m	\$1,630.8m	\$1,702.6m
Total	\$2,379.8m	\$2,563.1m	\$2,679.1m²
Child Support Agency (CSA) collection performance since inception (1988)			
	90.0%	90.8%	91.2%
Total collections	\$7,887.0m	\$8,875.3m	\$9,895.2m
Total liabilities	\$8,759.2m	\$9,774.8m	\$10,847.0m
Average annual liabilities per case:			
CSA collect	\$4,698.02	\$4,884.31	\$5,073.70
Private collect	\$6,147.99	\$6,416.98	\$6,605.61
Total	\$5,533.72	\$5,769.44	\$5,953.31
Support for parents			
CSA caseload ³ :	768,537	781,026	797,978
% CSA collect ⁴	47.8%	47.4%	47.4%
% Private collect ⁴	52.2%	52.6%	52.6%
% Stage 1 Court Orders ⁴	1.4%	0.8%	0.4%
% Stage 2 formula assessment ⁴	98.6%	99.2%	99.6%
Children who are eligible for child support payments (eligible children—Stage 2 cases only)	1,105,701	1,120,328	1,128,710
CSA customer numbers:			
Paying parents	680,815	722,113	735,758
Receiving parents	676,575	720,459	735,304
Total	1,357,390	1,442,572	1,471,062
Child Support Scheme (CSS) savings and costs to government			
Total savings to government outlays	\$510.0m	\$539.0m	\$515m
Scheme costs by Agency⁵			
CSA	\$274.7m	\$278.0m	\$299.4m
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	n/a	\$3.0m	n/a
Attorney-General's Department	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dollars collected/transferred by CSA for each dollar spent.	\$8.55	\$9.07	\$8.99
CSA cost to collect/transfer each dollar.	11.5 cents	11.0 cents	11.1 cents

- Note:
1. This assumes that private collect cases transfer all their liability.
 2. The figure was correct at the beginning of July 2007 but retrospective adjustments to prior year private collect liabilities can impact on a later view of this figure.
 3. All cases (active cases and cases ended with arrears) are included in these totals.
 4. Percentages in these rows are calculated using active caseload totals (excluding cases ended with arrears).
 5. CSA funding figures in this table do not include new policy initiatives. Collection figures do not include debt collected under new policy initiatives.



Introduction

This report is the eleventh 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.

All tables contain data for all cases, unless otherwise labelled. All cases include active cases with a current assessment and cases that have ended with arrears.

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 to ensure the needs of children 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 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
- the 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.

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 to all children of parents who separated on or after 1 October 1989, or who have a child born on or after that date, unless child support is payable for them pursuant to certain court orders, or according to an international liability. For this reason, most cases administered by the CSA are now Stage 2 liabilities.

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.

1.3 Child Support Scheme Reforms 2006–08

From 1 July 2006, the government has been progressively changing the Child Support Scheme. The new Child Support Scheme is being implemented in three stages. Stage 1 of the reforms were implemented on 1 July 2006 and Stage 2 on 1 January 2007. Major changes to the Scheme, including changes to the child support formula, will start on 1 July 2008.

In changing the Scheme, the government has accepted the recommendations in the Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support,³ chaired by Professor Parkinson (released in May 2005). This review was initiated in response to a recommendation of the House of Representatives Committee on Family and Community Affairs Report on child custody arrangements in the event of family separation. This report was titled, *Every Picture Tells a Story*,⁴ and was released in December 2003.

■ Stage 1 – introduced on 1 July 2006:

- The minimum payment was increased from \$260 per year to \$320 per year to ensure that child support payments kept pace with inflation.
- A strengthening of the Child Support Agency's (CSA) capacity to ensure paying parents fulfil their child support obligations in full and on time.
- Recognition of costs incurred by paying parents on Newstart and related payments who have at least 14 per cent contact with their children by paying them a higher rate of Centrelink payment.
- A reduction to the maximum amount of child support payable by high income earners to ensure that the liabilities of these paying parents are more aligned with the costs of children. The maximum paying parent child support income reduced from \$139,347 to \$104,702.
- An introduction of clearer guidelines for assessing the capacity of parents to earn income.
- Paying parents were able to spend a greater proportion of their payments directly on their children by increasing the percentage of Non Agency Payments (NAPs) from 25 per cent to 30 per cent.

■ Stage 2 – introduced on 1 January 2007:

- Introduction of the ability for parents to seek independent review of CSA objection decisions by the Social Security Appeals Tribunal, improving accountability and transparency and reducing reliance on the courts.
- Broadening of the powers of the courts to ensure that child support obligations are met, and a strengthening of the relationship between the courts and the Child Support Scheme, making the process easier and more responsive to parents' needs.
- Allowing separating parents more time to work out parenting arrangements before their Family Tax Benefit is affected.

■ Stage 3 – from 1 July 2008:

- Introduce a new child support formula to ensure more balanced assessments based on the researched costs of children, encourage shared parenting and recognise the costs of contact.
- Ensure a minimum payment is made to each eligible family.
- Paying parent income from second jobs and overtime that assists with re-establishment after separation can now be excluded for up to three years.
- Ensure a more balanced treatment of paying parents who have repartnered and have subsequent children (and step-children, in limited circumstances) when calculating their child support liability.
- Improve the arrangements for parents who wish to make agreements for ongoing child support or lump sum payments.
- Make the child support rules easier for reconciling parents.

The changes build on the government's reform of the family law system to encourage shared parenting and reduce conflict. This will complement the commitment of nearly \$400 million over four years to establish the Family Relationship Advice Line (FRAL), the network of Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) and related services in the community. The services opened on 1 July 2006 and CSA has been referring customers since that time.

3. Ministerial Task force on Child Support, *In the Best Interests of Children – Reforming the Child Support Scheme*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, May 2005.

4. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs, *Every Picture Tells a Story*, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, December 2003.

1.4 The Child Support formula

CSA uses a legislated formula to calculate the amount of child support to be paid. The formula is applied to the paying 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.
2. Less an allowance for each natural or adopted dependent child living with the liable parent.
3. 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 child support. The percentage varies according to the number of children:

Table 1.1: Child Support Percentages

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 receiving parent income above the disregarded income amount
- D** is the child support percentage
- E** is the amount payable by the paying parent.

Taxable income used in the child support formula is the income shown on the paying parent's tax return for the last financial year. For child support purposes the maximum taxable income used in the formula from 1 July 2006 is \$104,702 and, from 1 January 2007 is \$109,135.

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

Table 1.2: Exempt income amounts

	Exempt income 2006	Exempt income 2007
No natural or adopted children	\$13,983	\$14,646
With natural or adopted children	\$23,349	\$24,464
Allowance for child under 13	\$2,424	\$2,489
Allowance for child 13–15	\$3,380	\$3,504
Allowance for child 16–17	\$5,307	\$5,560

Source: The CSA's Legal Practitioners Guide (www.csa.gov.au)

Note 1. The exempt income amount shown for each year is the amount applied to assessments for child support periods starting in that year.

If a receiving parent's child support income amount exceeds the disregarded income amount⁵, then the paying parent's income is reduced by 50 per cent of the receiving parent'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 receiving parent had less income than the disregarded income amount). The receiving parent's disregarded income amount is that part of the receiving parent's income below Average Weekly Earnings of all employees (\$43,654 for 1.1.2007 to 31.12.2007).

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

1.5 Administrative arrangements between the CSA as part of the Department of Human Services, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Attorney-General's Department

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

Between October 1998 and October 2004 the Child Support Scheme was administered by the CSA as part of the then Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS). The Scheme partners were the then Department of Family and Community Services, incorporating CSA, and the Attorney-General's Department.

In October 2004 CSA became part of the new Commonwealth Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS incorporates six agencies: Centrelink, the CSA, Medicare, Health Services Australia, Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services and Australian Hearing. FaCS became the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) in January 2006, and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) in December 2007. DHS and its agencies have the responsibility for the delivery of services, while FaHCSIA has the responsibility for policy development.

5. 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.

1.5.1 The role of the CSA in the Department of Human Services

The CSA 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
- assess child support payable (except for liabilities created by some court orders and by international liabilities)
- collect payments where requested
- provide information for parents on child support matters
- refer customers to government and other organisations that support separated parents
- administer international cases where requested
- develop strategic service delivery approaches and micro policy
- liaise with other agencies on service delivery issues and
- report to the Minister for Human Services and Parliament.

As at 1 July 2007, these activities were undertaken in 14 offices around Australia, and 27 Regional Service Centres located in Centrelink offices and one ATO Office (Darwin) in regional Australia.

CSA accesses taxation and Centrelink information to efficiently assess and collect child support.

1.5.2 The role of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

The Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) portfolio is responsible for a broad range of social policy issues affecting Australian society and the living standards of Australian families, communities and individuals.

More specifically, the portfolio is responsible for policy in relation to families, Indigenous people, carers, housing, community support, disability services and child care services. FaHCSIA also advises the government on the social policy impact of wider government policy including taxation, superannuation and savings policy. The role of FaHCSIA in the Child Support Scheme covers:

- strategic and macro policy development, analysis and research
- liaison with other agencies on policy issues
- ensuring appropriate linkages between income support, family payments and child support and
- reporting to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Parliament on policy issues.

1.5.3 The role of Centrelink

Centrelink is the primary service delivery agency for the Department of Human Services 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 who are eligible for more than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit take reasonable action to obtain child support and
- adjusting Family Tax Benefit payments to individuals in receipt of child support payments.

Over 1,000 service delivery points ranging from large Customer Service Centres to small visiting services have been set up across Australia to provide families with easy access to Customer Services Officers, to ensure their family payment options are the most suitable for their circumstances.

1.5.4 The role of the Attorney-General's Department

The Attorney-General's Department advises the Australian government on matters relating to family law and is responsible for a range of services to assist families. These services include advice and assistance provided through Legal Aid Commissions, Community Legal Centres (CLCs) and Family Relationship Centres (FRCs).

Legal aid commissions are funded to provide legal assistance for Commonwealth law matters, including family law matters. This assistance includes information, advice, and duty lawyer services at the courts, and grants for legal representation. From 2007–2008 an additional \$1.2 million annually will be provided to legal aid commissions to assist clients with the changes to the Child Support Scheme.

Community legal centres throughout Australia are also funded to provide legal assistance services. Thirteen specialist CLCs located throughout Australia provide legal assistance to parents eligible to receive child support and parents responsible for paying child support with funding of more than \$1.4 million in 2006-07.

FRCs have been established to strengthen family relationships and work through relationship difficulties and provide dispute resolution services for separating families needing assistance to determine parenting arrangements. A Family Relationship Advice Line (FRAL) has also been established to provide telephone assistance. As of July 2007, 40 Centres had opened throughout Australia with the remaining 25 due to open in July 2008. CSA has been transferring or referring customers to the FRCs and FRAL since the initial 15 FRCs were opened in July 2006.

1.5.5 The role of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal

The Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT) was originally established in 1975. It is now a statutory body established under the Social Security (Administration) Act 1999 to conduct merits review of administrative decisions made under the social security law, the family assistance law, child support law and various other pieces of legislation. The Social Security (Administration) Act 1999, the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999 and the Child Support (Registration and Collection) Act 1988 set out the powers, functions and procedures of the SSAT.

The SSAT is within the portfolio of the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. From 1 January 2007, the SSAT has the authority to review most CSA objection decisions, on application by a paying or receiving parent or a non-parent carer, including:

- refusal of extension of time to lodge an objection
- application for assessment - accept/not accept
- particulars of assessment (income or level of care)
- particulars of registration
- change of assessment
- low-income non-enforcement period
- refusal to remit penalties
- failure to collect arrears
- acceptance or refusal of a child support agreement
- credit or refusal to credit non agency payments and
- acceptance or refusal of an estimate.

The SSAT generally has the power to affirm, vary or set aside a decision under review. Where it sets aside a decision, the Tribunal may either substitute a new decision or send the matter back to CSA with directions or recommendations for further action.

1.6 How the Child Support Scheme works

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

1. Self-administration: an entirely private arrangement between parents, which includes cases where child support is not sought (not generally available to parents in receipt of more than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A).
2. Private collect: registration and assessment by the CSA but with payment made directly between the parents.
3. CSA collect: registration, assessment, collection and transfer by the CSA.

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.

Paying parents can make payments directly to CSA where CSA collection is required. Alternatively, child support can be deducted from a paying parent'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 paying parent, 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 \$320 a year (\$333 from 1 January 2007) 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)
- and
- issuing Departure Prohibition Orders (DPOs) that prevent paying parents with outstanding liabilities leaving the country.

In addition, overdue child support 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

The majority of separated parents with care of children are entitled to receive Family Tax Benefit. Centrelink and CSA therefore have a large number of mutual customers. As mentioned in section 1.5.3, Family Tax Benefit Part A (FTB Part A) customers who have children from a previous relationship must take reasonable action to obtain child support in order to be eligible to receive more than the base rate of FTB Part A. Reasonable action generally 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.

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 2007:

- A total of 83.4 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 or no action was required.
- FaHCSIA were unable to determine the maintenance action status for 14.3 per cent of children due to data limitations.
- Another 1.1 per cent of children of FTB Part A customers were granted an exemption.
- The remaining 1.1 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.

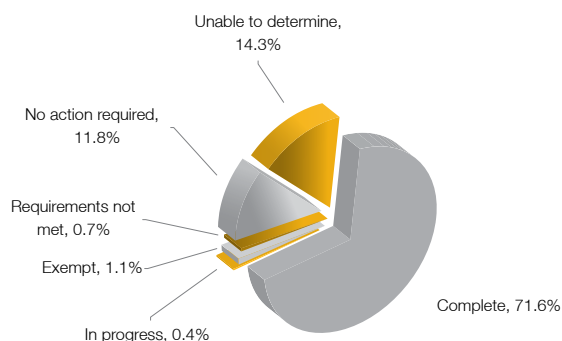
Table 2.1: Action taken to obtain child support, June 2007

Maintenance action	Number of children	%
Complete	931,434	71.6
In progress	4,654	0.4
Exempt	14,623	1.1
Requirements not met	9,685	0.7
No action required	153,874	11.8
Unable to determine	185,949	14.3
Total	1,300,219	100.0

Source: FaHCSIA, June 2007.

Note: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Chart 2.1: Action taken to obtain child support, June 2007



Source: FaHCSIA, June 2007.

Key fact: The majority of separated parents have taken action to obtain child support.



3.0 Caseload

3.1 Caseload⁶

As at June 2007 there were 797,978 cases. The majority (98.6 per cent) were Stage 2 cases, as most children are now eligible for administrative assessment of child support liabilities (see section 1.2, above). Each case has two CSA customers: the paying parent (the parent who pays the child support) and the receiving parent (the parent or non-parent carer who receives the child support). There are fewer paying parent and receiving parent customers than active cases as some paying parents and receiving parents are involved in more than one case. As a result, CSA had around 1.5 million paying parents and receiving parents at June 2007.

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, Table 3.2 and Chart 3.1.

Table 3.1: Total caseload¹ by stage

30 June	Stage 1		Stage 2		Total Number	Net average monthly increase
	Number	%	Number	%		
2002	37,070	5.4	652,273	94.6	689,343	
2003	30,359	4.3	681,182	95.7	711,541	1,850
2004	24,180	3.2	721,337	96.8	745,517	2,831
2005	18,702	2.4	749,835	97.6	768,537	1,918
2006	14,060	1.8	766,966	98.2	781,026	1,041
2007	11,563	1.4	786,415	98.6	797,978	1,413

Source: CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Note: 1. Total caseload figures include cases that have no current liability but debt is still being enforced. Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: Stage 1 court order cases are declining, now representing 1.4 per cent of all cases.

6. '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.

Table 3.2: Active caseload by stage¹

30 June	Stage 1		Stage 2		Total	Net average monthly increase
	Number	%	Number	%		
1991	62,758	60.9	40,348	39.1	103,106	-
1992	70,787	50.7	68,865	49.3	139,652	3,046
1993	73,819	34.9	137,762	65.1	211,581	5,994
1994	61,082	22.0	217,103	78.0	278,185	5,550
1995	60,226	17.9	276,091	82.1	336,317	4,844
1996	58,442	14.8	336,466	85.2	394,908	4,883
1997	54,645	12.2	393,400	87.8	448,045	4,428
1998	50,935	10.3	443,599	89.7	494,534	3,874
1999	45,986	8.6	489,583	91.4	535,569	3,420
2000	40,664	7.1	529,046	92.9	569,710	2,845
2001	34,650	5.7	577,682	94.3	612,332	3,552
2002	30,626	4.7	626,706	95.3	657,332	3,750
2003	22,235	3.2	663,734	96.8	685,969	2,386
2004	16,048	2.3	696,632	97.7	712,680	2,226
2005	10,440	1.4	722,194	98.6	732,634	1,663
2006	5,868	0.8	736,295	99.2	742,163	794
2007	2,645	0.4	749,144	99.6	751,789	802

Source: CSA COGNOS (CS5), June 2007.

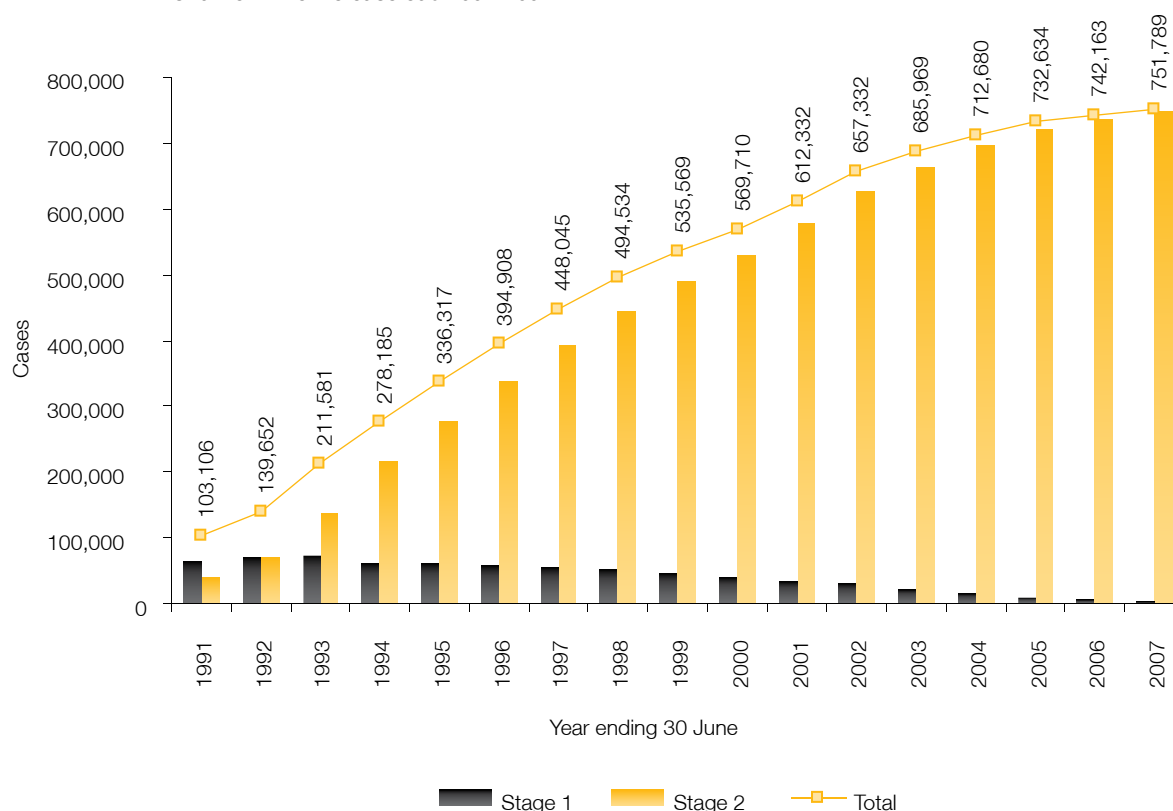
Note: 1. Active caseload figures for Stage 1 in this table include 'processing not finalised', 'registered and collecting', 'elections not to collect' and 'keyed court orders/no applications'. Active caseload figures for Stage 2 in this table include 'processing not finalised', 'total assessed, registered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

Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: Stage 1 court order cases are declining, now representing 0.4% of all active cases.

Table 3.2 shows the monthly net rate of increase in total cases i.e. total new cases less the cases that have ended during the same period. The net increase was slightly greater in 2006–07 compared to 2005–06. Five years ago, between 2001 and 2002, the caseload grew by an average of 3,750 cases per month. This compares with the current average increase of 802 cases per month between June 2006 and June 2007.

Chart 3.1: Active caseload 1991-2007



Source: The CSA (CS5), June 2007.

On an 'all cases' basis, private collect cases decreased to 49.7 per cent by the end of June 2007 (see Table 3.3). However on an 'active cases' measure, private collect cases represented 52.6 per cent of the active caseload at the end of June 2007 (see Table 3.4 and Charts 3.2 and 3.3 below). Of the 35,357 new cases registered in the first six months of 2007, over 63 per cent were private collect. This is consistent with the government's aim to ensure child support arrangements are non-intrusive to personal privacy and demonstrates that parents are increasingly able to negotiate and manage their own circumstances.

Key fact: About 63 per cent of new customers agreed to privately pay child support.

Table 3.3: Total caseload by collection method

30 June	CSA collect		Private collect		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
2002	362,408	52.6	326,935	47.4	689,343
2003	367,335	51.6	344,206	48.4	711,541
2004	375,438	50.4	370,079	49.6	745,517
2005	385,059	50.1	383,478	49.9	768,537
2006	389,343	49.9	391,683	50.1	781,026
2007	401,198	50.3	396,780	49.7	797,978

Source: CSA (customer research extract), June 2007.

Note: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Table 3.4: Active caseload by collection method¹

30 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	342,414	48.2	368,619	51.8	711,033
2005	348,833	47.8	381,523	52.2	730,356
2006	350,382	47.4	389,387	52.6	739,769
2007	355,254	47.4	393,696	52.6	748,950

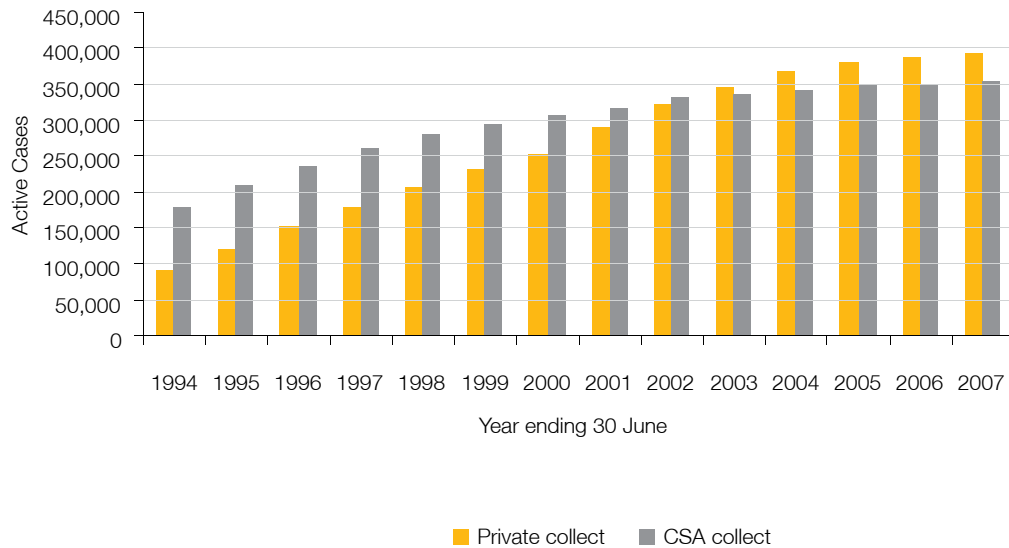
Source: CSA (CS5 Report), June 2007.

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.

Percentages may not add due to rounding.

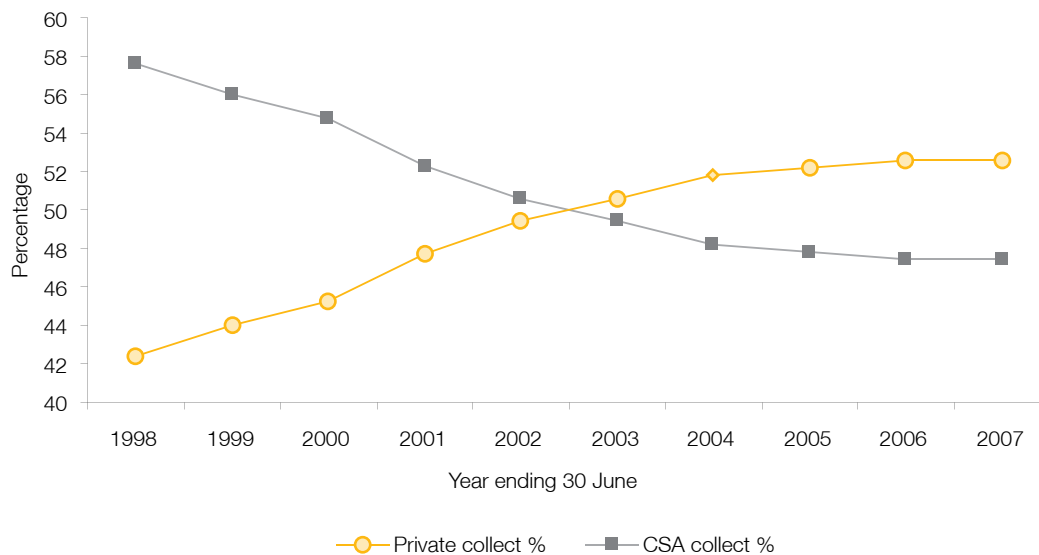
Key fact: On an 'active caseload' basis the majority of cases are private collect (52.6 per cent) i.e. parents agreeing to pay their child support privately.

Chart 3.2: CSA caseload - private collect and CSA collect



Source: CSA (CS5 Report), June 2007.

Chart 3.3: Private collect / CSA collect ratios



Source: CSA (CS5 Report), June 2007.

3.3 International cases

Table 3.5 records the growth in international cases in the Australian Child Support Scheme. This 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 enforcement of the majority of international child support matters from these international child support jurisdictions to the CSA using administrative processes.

Table 3.5: 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	0.4	448,045
1998	1,876	0.4	494,534
1999	2,510	0.5	535,569
2000	2,718	0.5	569,710
2001	5,806	1.0	612,332
2002	9,007	1.4	657,332
2003	14,247	2.1	685,969
2004	17,490	2.5	712,680
2005	20,992	2.9	732,634
2006	24,312	3.3	742,163
2007	27,562	3.7	751,789

Source: The CSA (CS5 Report), June 2007.

Key fact: International cases have continued to grow as a proportion of total active caseload.

3.4 Assessment type

Table 3.6 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 are CSA collect arrangements (4.2 per cent as opposed to 2.2 per cent). CSA collect cases are over six times more likely to have a liability that is based on a change of assessment from the formula than private collect cases (3.1 per cent compared to 0.5 per cent).

Table 3.6: Caseload by assessment type and collection method, June 2007

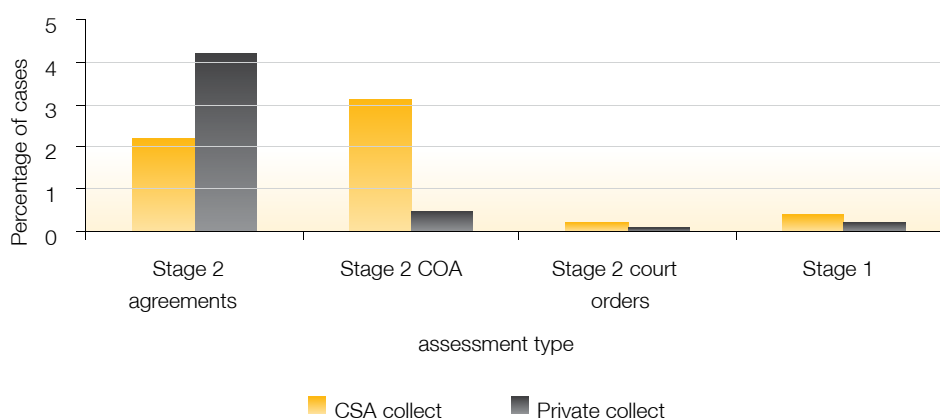
Assessment type	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Stage 2 formula	331,226	82.6	373,280	94.1	704,506	88.3
Stage 2 agreements	8,945	2.2	16,776	4.2	25,721	3.2
Stage 2 change of assessment ¹	12,476	3.1	1,825	0.5	14,301	1.8
Stage 2 court orders	822	0.2	419	0.1	1,241	0.2
Stage 1	1,711	0.4	653	0.2	2,364	0.3
Ended with arrears	46,018	11.5	3,827	1.0	49,845	6.2
Total	401,198	100.0	396,780	100.0	797,978	100.0

Source: CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Note: 1. The total number of cases with a Stage 2 Change of Assessment differs from the total number of assessments varied because of a Change of Assessment (COA) application as reported in Table 3.7: Change of Assessment—Applications Finalised During the Period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. This is because Table 3.7 reports total assessments varied by COA in the financial year 2006-07 whereas this table reports all current assessments that are varied by COA applications. Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: The majority of cases have a Stage 2 formula assessment (88.3 per cent).

Chart 3.4: Assessment type (excluding formula assessment), June 2007



Source: The CSA customer research extract (active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007

3.5 Change of assessment

In 1992 a change was introduced to allow Stage 2 parents only to apply to CSA for a departure from a formula assessment of child support⁷. Prior to that, an application had to be made to the Court. Since 1992 there have been more than 230,000 applications. Approximately 77 per cent of applications were accepted for the 12 months ending June 2007. Of these 17,486 accepted applications, 74 per cent (12,901) resulted in the assessment being varied. Change of Assessment (COA) applications have been declining as a percentage of the active Stage 2 caseload, being 8.3 per cent in 1997–98, 3.6 per cent in 2004–05 and 2.8 per cent in 2006–07.

Table 3.7: COA applications finalised during the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007

	Paying parent initiated		Receiving parent initiated		Registrar initiated		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Applications accepted								
Assessment varied	4,794	44.9	7,522	66.6	585	91.0	12,901	57.0
Assessment not varied	2,286	21.4	1,664	14.7	29	4.5	3,979	17.6
Refused to make decision ¹	451	4.2	62	0.5	0	0.0	513	2.3
Customer agreement	29	0.3	55	0.5	9	1.4	93	0.4
Subtotal	7,560	70.8	9,303	82.4	623	96.9	17,486	77.3
Applications not accepted								
Withdrawn	2,055	19.2	1,410	12.5	6	0.9	3,471	15.3
Incomplete	832	7.8	457	4.0	2	0.3	1,291	5.7
Ineligible	233	2.2	122	1.1	12	1.9	367	1.6
Subtotal	3,120	29.2	1,989	17.6	20	3.1	5,129	22.7
Applications finalised	10,680	100	11,292	100	643	100.0	22,615	100.0

Source: CSA (COA Team), June 2007.

Note: 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.

Key fact: 74 per cent of applications for a change of assessment resulted in a variation.

7. From 1 January 2007, a court may make a departure order (Stage 2 court orders chart 3.4, above) only in limited circumstances – where the parent's circumstances are so complex that CSA cannot make a decision, where the parents seek a change of assessment for more than 18 months retrospectively, or where the parents have other matters before the courts.

3.6 Type of care arrangement

Table 3.8 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 two and a half times that of CSA collect cases.

Table 3.8: Stage 2 caseload by care code¹, June 2007

Time children spend with receiving parent		CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
Care code	% of Nights	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Substantial	30.0-39.9	1,831	0.5	4,191	1.1	6,022	0.8
Shared	40.0-59.9	11,294	2.9	37,318	9.5	48,612	6.2
Major	60.0-69.9	8,630	2.2	15,321	3.9	23,951	3.0
Sole	70.0 and over	370,356	94.5	337,474	85.6	707,830	90.0
Total		392,111	100.0	394,304	100.0	786,415	100.0

Source: CSA (customer research extract) for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Notes: 1. Includes Stage 2 cases only, cases with a current liability and cases that have ended with arrears.
Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: In 90 per cent of cases, the receiving parent cares for the children more than 70 per cent of the time.



4.0 Customer overview by collection method and stage

4.1 Number of customers

As at June 2007 there were 797,978 cases (active cases and cases ended with arrears) covered by the Child Support Scheme. However, a number of customers are involved in more than one case, meaning that there are fewer receiving parents or paying parents than there are cases. The number of paying parents and receiving parents involved in multiple cases are recorded in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below.

Table 4.1: Paying parents by number of cases and collection method, June 2007

Number of cases	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	319,822	89.7	359,448	94.8	679,270	92.3
2	33,176	9.3	18,183	4.8	51,359	7.0
3	3,357	0.9	1,250	0.3	4,607	0.6
4	333	0.1	118	0.0	451	0.1
5 and over	55	0.0	16	0.0	71	0.0
Total	356,743	100.0	379,015	100.0	735,758	100.0

Source: CSA (customer research extract) for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Notes: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: About eight per cent of paying parents have more than one case.

Table 4.2: Receiving parents by number of cases and collection method, June 2007

Number of cases	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	325,141	91.3	351,880	92.8	677,021	92.1
2	28,703	8.1	25,480	6.7	54,183	7.4
3	2,257	0.6	1,568	0.4	3,825	0.5
4 and over	183	0.1	92	0.0	275	0.0
Total	356,284	100.0	379,020	100.0	735,304	100.0

Source: CSA (customer research extract) for all active cases and cases ended with arrears, June 2007.

Note: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: Almost eight per cent of receiving parents have more than one case.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show that around 92 per cent of paying parents and receiving parents are involved in just one case. About seven per cent of paying parents and receiving parents are involved in two cases, while fewer than one per cent of all paying parents and receiving parents are involved in three or more cases.

4.2 Number of children

4.2.1 Children subject to child support assessments (Stage 2)

There were 1,128,710 children involved in Stage 2 cases registered with CSA as at 30 June 2007.

Children who are eligible to be included in an administrative 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. Approximately 66 per cent of Stage 2 CSA collect cases have one eligible child, while 57 per cent of Stage 2 private collect cases have one eligible child. There are up to two eligible children in 92 per cent of CSA collect cases and 89 per cent in private collect cases. There are up to three children in about 98 per cent of CSA collect and private collect cases.

Table 4.3: Eligible children per active case—Stage 2 cases only, June 2007

No. of children	CSA collect			Private collect			Total		
	Cases	Children	% of cases	Cases	Children	% of cases	Cases	Children	% of Cases
1	231,104	231,104	65.6	223,991	223,991	57.3	455,095	455,095	61.2
2	91,661	183,322	26.0	122,326	244,652	31.3	213,987	427,974	28.8
3	23,026	69,078	6.5	34,598	103,794	8.8	57,624	172,872	7.7
4	5,125	20,500	1.5	7,947	31,788	2.0	13,072	52,288	1.8
5	1,113	5,565	0.3	1,688	8,440	0.4	2,801	14,005	0.4
6	310	1,860	0.1	433	2,598	0.1	743	4,458	0.1
7	87	609	0.0	112	784	0.0	199	1,393	0.0
eight or more	31	258	0.0	44	367	0.0	75	625	0.0
Total	352,457	512,296	100.0	391,139	616,414	100.0	743,596	1,128,710	100.0

Source: CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Note: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: 90 per cent of Stage 2 cases have one or two eligible children.

Table 4.4 shows a comparison between international and domestic cases. International cases are slightly more likely to have only one child than domestic cases. Domestic cases have on average 1.52 children per case while international cases have on average fewer eligible children (1.43) per case.

Table 4.4: Eligible children per active case—Stage 2 cases only, June 2007

No. of children	Domestic			International			Total		
	Cases	Children	% of cases	Cases	Children	% of cases	Cases	Children	% of Cases
1	437,003	437,003	61.0	18,092	18,092	67.6	455,095	455,095	61.2
2	207,415	414,830	28.9	6,572	13,144	24.6	213,987	427,974	28.8
3	56,083	168,249	7.8	1,541	4,623	5.8	57,624	172,872	7.7
4	12,677	50,708	1.8	395	1,580	1.5	13,072	52,288	1.8
5	2,688	13,440	0.4	113	565	0.4	2,801	14,005	0.4
6	708	4,248	0.1	35	210	0.1	743	4,458	0.1
7	191	1,337	0.0	8	56	0.0	199	1,393	0.0
8 or more	73	608	0.0	2	17	0.0	75	625	0.0
Total	716,838	1,090,423	100.0	26,758	38,287	100.0	743,596	1,128,710	100.0

Source: CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Note: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: International cases, on average, have fewer eligible children. 68 per cent of international cases have one eligible child while only 61 per cent of domestic cases have one eligible child.

4.2.2 Paying parents' subsequent families

Formula assessments make allowance for 'relevant dependent children' of the paying parent. These are children under the age of 18 years who are the natural or adopted child of the paying parent and that paying 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 paying parent's exempt income amount. More than eight per cent of all Stage 2 cases 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 2007

No. of children	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	24,163	6.2	13,474	3.4	37,637	4.8
2	14,002	3.6	5,707	1.4	19,709	2.5
3	3,833	1.0	1,127	0.3	4,960	0.6
4	810	0.2	238	0.1	1,048	0.1
5 or more	244	0.1	60	0.0	304	0.0
Total cases with relevant dependent children	43,052	11.0	20,606	5.2	63,658	8.1
Total stage 2 cases	392,111	100.0	394,304	100.0	786,415	100.0

Source: CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Notes: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: Only eight per cent of Stage 2 cases have relevant dependent children.

4.3 Number and gender of paying parents and receiving parents

Table 4.6 shows that, on a total caseload basis, 88.9 per cent of CSA Collect paying parents are male and 10.4 per cent are female. A higher percentage of private collect paying parents are female (12.5 per cent). Of the 35,357 cases first registered in the first six months of 2007, approximately 24 per cent of paying parents were female and 73 per cent were male.

Table 4.6: Paying parent gender by collection method, June 2007 (all cases)

	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	356,801	88.9	343,701	86.6	700,502	87.8
Female	41,691	10.4	49,542	12.5	91,233	11.4
Total¹	401,198	100.0	396,780	100.0	797,978	100.0

Source: CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Notes: 1. The 'total' figure includes 6,243 cases where the gender of the paying parent could not be identified from data held on the Child Support System (2,706 CSA collect and 3,537 private collect).

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

Key fact: Of the 35,357 cases first registered in the first six months of 2007, approximately 24 per cent of paying parents were female and 73 per cent were male.

Table 4.7: Receiving parent gender by collection method, June 2007 (all cases)

	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	40,161	10.0	48,871	12.3	89,032	11.2
Female	357,001	89.0	344,378	86.8	701,379	87.9
Total¹	401,198	100.0	396,780	100.0	797,978	100.0

Source: CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Notes: 1. The 'total' figure includes 7,567 cases where the gender of the receiving parent could not be identified from data held on the Child Support System (4,036 CSA collect and 3,531 Private collect).

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

Key fact: In about 88 per cent of cases, the paying parent is male, and in 11 per cent they are female. Conversely, in about 11 per cent of cases the receiving parent is male, and in 88 per cent they are female.

Table 4.7 shows that, on a total caseload basis, 10 per cent of CSA collect receiving parents are male and 89.0 per cent of CSA collect receiving parents are female. Furthermore, 12.3 per cent of private collect receiving parents are male and 86.8 per cent are female. Of the 35,357 cases first registered in the first six months of 2007, over 23 per cent of receiving parents were male and 72 per cent were female.

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 48 per cent of international cases have been registered in the last five years, compared with 32 per cent for domestic cases.

Table 4.8: Age of cases by domestic and international status, June 2007 (all cases)

Case age in years ¹	Start date of case	Domestic		International		Total	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	2007 ²	31,754	4.2	3,603	10.1	35,357	4.4
2	2006	56,401	7.4	4,661	13.0	61,062	7.7
3	2005	52,711	6.9	2,937	8.2	55,648	7.0
4	2004	52,570	6.9	3,577	10.0	56,147	7.0
5	2003	51,500	6.8	2,528	7.1	54,028	6.8
6	2002	54,777	7.2	3,201	8.9	57,978	7.3
7	2001	60,301	7.9	3,500	9.8	63,801	8.0
8	2000	56,625	7.4	2,158	6.0	58,783	7.4
9	1999	47,263	6.2	1,229	3.4	48,492	6.1
10	1998	43,550	5.7	1,145	3.2	44,695	5.6
11	1997	46,956	6.2	1,197	3.3	48,153	6.0
12	1996	42,644	5.6	1,081	3.0	43,725	5.5
13	1995	38,867	5.1	992	2.8	39,859	5.0
14	1994	37,875	5.0	965	2.7	38,840	4.9
15	1993	38,185	5.0	1,001	2.8	39,186	4.9
16	1992	22,473	2.9	676	1.9	23,149	2.9
17	1991	13,740	1.8	539	1.5	14,279	1.8
18	1990	9,765	1.3	429	1.2	10,194	1.3
19	1989	2,852	0.4	259	0.7	3,111	0.4
20	1988	1,379	0.2	112	0.3	1,491	0.2
Total		762,188	100.0	35,790	100.0	797,978	100.0

Source: CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

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

2. The 2007 data is for the half year to 30 June.

4.5 Income of paying parents and receiving parents

Tables 4.9, 4.10, 4.11 and 4.12 show paying parent and receiving parent incomes by CSA collect and private collect arrangements from two sources: the Tax Returns Database (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 TRDB information but also includes estimated or derived income amounts for parents who have not lodged a tax return.

Table 4.9: Paying parent child support income, June 2007¹

Paying parents	CSA collect	Private collect	Total
Total number	401,198	396,780	797,978
Median	\$16,974	\$30,000	\$25,250
Average	\$24,917	\$37,223	\$31,036

Source: CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

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

Key fact: On average private collect paying parents have a child support income that is 49 per cent higher than CSA collect cases.

Table 4.10: Paying parent taxable income, June 2007¹

Paying parents	CSA collect	Private collect	All
Total Number	196,058	257,652	453,710
Median	\$34,822	\$39,111	\$37,158
Average	\$38,857	\$45,220	\$42,471

Source: Tax returns database and CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Notes: 1. There were 344,268 paying parents who were non-lodgers in the relevant year (205,140 CSA Collect and 139,128 private collect).

Key fact: On average private collect paying parents have a taxable income that is only 16 per cent higher than CSA collect cases.

Table 4.11: Receiving parent child support income, June 2007^{1, 2}

Receiving parents	CSA collect	Private collect	All
Total number	401,198	396,780	797,978
Median	\$12,559	\$13,570	\$12,808
Average	\$16,595	\$18,429	\$17,507

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Note: 1. Child support median and average incomes recorded in this table do not include many of the benefits paid to resident parents by Centrelink.
2. Receiving parent child support income figures reported in this table will understate the total income available to receiving parent parents as it does not take into account access to taxable Centrelink benefits for those parents who have not lodged a tax return.

Key fact: On average private collect receiving parents have a child support income that is 11 per cent higher than CSA collect cases.

Table 4.12: Receiving parent taxable income (Tax Returns Database), June 2007¹

Receiving parents	CSA collect	Private collect	All
Total number	213,616	226,157	439,773
Median	\$24,039	\$23,800	\$23,918
Average	\$27,806	\$27,538	\$27,669

Source: Tax Returns Database and The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Notes: 1. There were 358,205 receiving parents who were non-lodgers in the relevant year (187,582 CSA collect and 170,623 private collect).

Key fact: On average private collect and CSA collect receiving parents have an almost identical taxable income.

Tables 4.9 to 4.12 show that paying parent median taxable incomes (for those who lodged) are significantly greater than the median taxable income of receiving parents (for those who lodged). Family Tax Benefit payments are not included in the incomes shown, as they are not considered to be income for child support purposes. Receiving parents from private collect and CSA collect collection methods have similar median incomes but paying parents in Private collect arrangements have significantly higher median child support incomes than those in CSA collect arrangements. Receiving parent 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 benefits like the possession of a Health Care Card.

4.6 Income sources of CSA paying parents who lodge income tax returns

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

The most common source of income for paying parents who lodged tax returns was salary and wages, with over 87 per cent of all paying parents deriving some or all of their income from this source. By comparison over 14 per cent of paying parents who lodged tax returns received some or all of their income from government benefits and allowances.

For those paying parents who lodged a tax return in 2005-06 the source with the highest average earnings was salary and wages (\$43,506) followed by partnerships and trusts (\$21,542) and net income or loss from business (\$15,333).

Table 4.13: Income sources of CSA paying parents who lodge income tax returns, June 2007¹

Top 10 income sources	Number	% of paying parents deriving income from source	Average earnings (\$)
Salary and wages	395,828	87.2	43,506
Allowance, Directors' fees	111,118	24.5	2,881
Gross interest	77,625	17.1	998
Govt. benefits and allowance	65,113	14.4	4,699
Net income or loss from business	56,409	12.4	15,333
Dividends	45,776	10.1	4,975
Gross rent	35,754	7.9	11,445
Partnerships and trusts	27,168	6.0	21,542
Eligible termination payments	14,730	3.2	8,701
Lump sum payments	7,729	1.7	7,020
Total for CSA paying parents who lodged for 2005-06	453,710	n/a²	42,471³

Note: 1. The results in this table are derived from the Tax Return Data Base (TRDB) of the ATO and only include those CSA paying parents who lodged tax returns for the 2005-06 financial year. For this reason the number of paying parents in receipt of benefits is particularly affected and under reports the number of paying parents in receipt of government benefits.
2. Paying parents can earn income from more than one source.
3. This is the average income for the 57% of paying parents who had lodged a tax return for 2005-06 by June 2007. Therefore it is not the same as the average income for all paying parents.

Key fact: The majority of all paying parents who lodged a current tax return earned income from wages and salaries (87 per cent).



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

From 1 July 1999, a minimum liability of \$260 per year applied to paying parents if their liability calculated, under the formula, was fewer than \$260 per year. Until 30 June 1999 paying parents in that situation were not required to pay child support. On 1 July 2006 the minimum payment was increased to \$320 per year, and increased again in January 2007 to \$333 per year. The minimum payment is now indexed yearly, in January, to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), so that minimum child support payments will keep pace with inflation.

There are a number of reasons why a parent may not be required to pay child support, including:

- the paying parent's income and resources are less than the minimum payment amount
- stage 1 court orders can have a clause that the paying parent will not have to pay child maintenance during periods of unemployment or in other circumstances
- a Stage 1 paying parent can apply to CSA not to enforce the court order during periods of unemployment
- where parents have an agreement that the liability be nil (usually during periods of unemployment) and/or
- where the parents equally share the care of their child and their incomes are also equal.

Table 5.1: Liability by collection method, June 2007 (all cases)

Annual payer liability(\$)	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Nil	20,280	5.1	45,961	11.6	66,241	8.3
\$1 to \$319	32,134	8.0	14,488	3.7	46,622	5.8
\$320	60,110	15.0	43,231	10.9	103,341	13.0
\$321 to \$332	287	0.1	223	0.1	510	0.1
\$333	51,666	12.9	31,681	8.0	83,347	10.4
Over \$333	190,703	47.5	257,369	64.9	448,072	56.2
Ended with arrears	46,018	11.5	3,827	1.0	49,845	6.2
Total	401,198	100.0	396,780	100.0	797,978	100.0

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Note: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: 56 per cent of paying parents pay more than the minimum child support amount.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show the percentage of CSA collect paying parents and private collect paying parents 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 minimum liabilities than private collect cases
- a higher proportion of CSA collect paying parents have liabilities under \$3,000 and
- a higher proportion of private collect paying parents 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 paying parent median incomes are significantly higher in private collect cases.

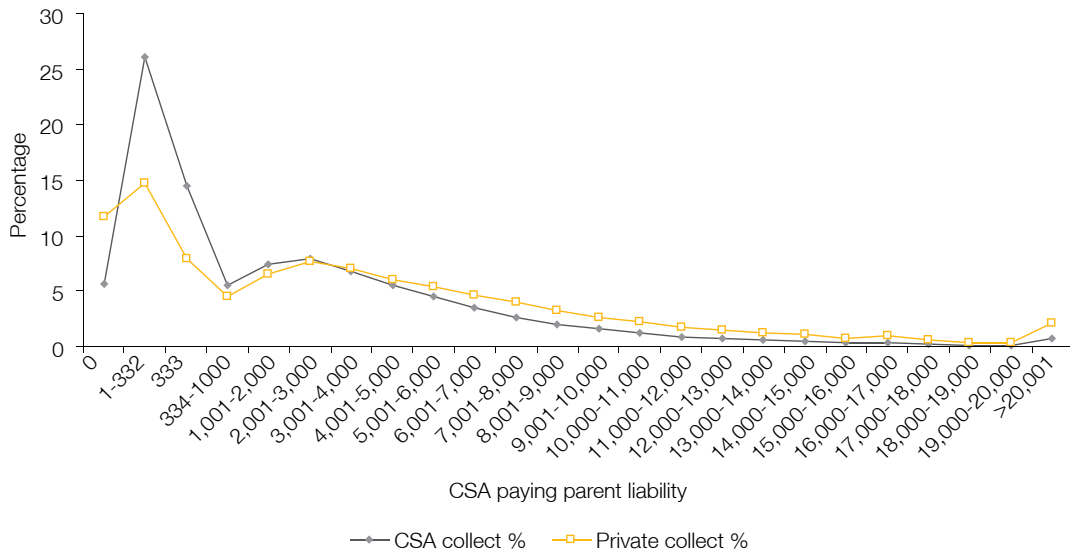
Table 5.2: Liability by collection method, June 2007 (all cases)

Annual payer liability(\$)	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Ended with arrears	46,018	11.5	3,827	1.0	49,845	6.2
0	20,280	5.1	45,961	11.6	66,241	8.3
1-319	32,134	8.0	14,488	3.7	46,622	5.8
320	60,110	15.0	43,231	10.9	103,341	13.0
321-332	287	0.1	223	0.1	510	0.1
333	51,666	12.9	31,681	8.0	83,347	10.4
334-500	4,799	1.2	4,338	1.1	9,137	1.1
501-1,000	14,892	3.7	13,696	3.5	28,588	3.6
1,001-2,000	26,465	6.6	25,680	6.5	52,145	6.5
2,001-3,000	28,034	7.0	30,375	7.7	58,409	7.3
3,001-4,000	24,051	6.0	27,958	7.0	52,009	6.5
4,001-5,000	19,382	4.8	23,633	6.0	43,015	5.4
5,001-6,000	16,513	4.1	21,379	5.4	37,892	4.7
6,001-7,000	12,467	3.1	18,597	4.7	31,064	3.9
7,001-8,000	9,471	2.4	15,541	3.9	25,012	3.1
8,001-9,000	7,214	1.8	12,957	3.3	20,171	2.5
9,001-10,000	5,575	1.4	10,699	2.7	16,274	2.0
10,000-11,000	4,300	1.1	8,929	2.3	13,229	1.7
11,000-12,000	3,370	0.8	7,169	1.8	10,539	1.3
12,000-13,000	2,693	0.7	5,950	1.5	8,643	1.1
13,000-14,000	2,334	0.6	5,059	1.3	7,393	0.9
14,000-15,000	1,828	0.5	4,248	1.1	6,076	0.8
15,000-16,000	1,352	0.3	3,508	0.9	4,860	0.6
16,000-17,000	1,409	0.4	3,918	1.0	5,327	0.7
17,000-18,000	993	0.2	2,528	0.6	3,521	0.4
18,000-19,000	496	0.1	1,412	0.4	1,908	0.2
19,000-20,000	490	0.1	1,426	0.4	1,916	0.2
>20,001	2,575	0.6	8,369	2.1	10,944	1.4
Total	401,198	100.0	396,780	100.0	797,978	100.0

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Note: Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Chart 5.1: CSA paying parent liability (for active cases) by collection method, June 2007



5.1.2 Average child support liabilities

Table 5.3 records the average annual child support by stage and collection method. There are two sets of averages—one set includes all cases and the other excludes cases where the assessment is \$333 a year or less. Where liabilities of \$333 or less have been excluded, there is a difference of \$854.88 per year between the average domestic liability (\$5,986.33 per year) and the average international liability (\$5,131.45 per year). Where all cases have been included, the difference between the domestic and international average liability figures is \$572.64 per year.

Table 5.3: Average child support liability by collection method¹, June 2007 (all cases)

Collection method	Average annual liabilities			Average annual liabilities (Liability more than \$333)		
	Domestic \$	International \$	Total \$	Domestic \$	International \$	Total \$
CSA collect	3,003.20	3,194.14	3,014.44	5,096.08	4,761.77	5,073.70
Private collect	4,991.91	4,246.32	4,977.38	6,613.38	6,172.38	6,605.61
Total	4,035.29	3,462.65	4,013.05	5,986.33	5,131.45	5,953.31

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases), June 2007.

Note: 1. Nil liability cases have been excluded from this table.

Key fact: On average (for all cases with a liability of more than \$333) domestic cases had a 17 per cent higher liability than international cases.

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. The average liabilities of the private collect cases are higher than the average liabilities for CSA collect cases.

Table 5.4: Average weekly liabilities by the number of eligible children by collection method¹ — Stage 2 cases only, June 2007

Eligible children	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	Average \$	Number	Average \$	Number	Average \$
1	218,643	46.67	196,200	69.93	414,843	57.67
2	86,311	76.96	108,916	124.40	195,227	103.42
3	21,605	88.14	31,072	146.06	52,677	122.31
4	4,841	80.25	7,202	135.41	12,043	113.24
5	1,047	60.64	1,540	108.00	2,587	88.83
6	291	54.53	400	100.66	691	81.24
7	84	58.81	106	73.56	190	67.04
8	21	47.47	29	65.99	50	58.21
Total²	332,849	57.75	345,474	95.52	678,323	76.99

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Note: 1. Nil liability cases have been excluded from this table.

2. Cases with more than eight eligible children have been excluded from this table as the numbers are insignificant (15 cases have been excluded).

Key fact: Stage 2 cases with three eligible children receive the highest average weekly child support.

5.2 Payments

5.2.1 Total credits and liabilities

Table 5.5 shows total liabilities and all credits for CSA collect cases since 1988. As at June 1991 a total of \$283 million in liabilities had been registered for paying parents, and \$185 million had actually been collected. In other words, CSA collections represented 65 per cent of all liabilities. By June 2007 CSA collect cumulative liabilities had risen to \$10,847 million and cumulative credits were up to \$9,895.2 million. This resulted in a 91.2 per cent crediting rate for CSA collect cases.

CSA figures show that in 2006-07, the 633,648 paying parents with a child support liability paid an average of \$4,026 in child support for the year (or \$77 a week). Of these, almost 185,000 (or 29%) paid more than \$100 a week, another 35% paid between \$10 and \$100 a week, 30% paid less than \$10 a week and only 5% did not pay anything in the last 12 months⁸.

8. Source: CSA's customer research extract, June 2007

Table 5.5: Cumulative credits and liabilities for CSA collect cases, June 2007¹

End June	Cumulative liabilities \$m	Cumulative credits \$m	Crediting rate % ³
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
1988–2005	8,759.2	7,887.0	90.0
1988–2006	9,774.8	8,875.3	90.8
1988–2007	10,847.0	9,895.2	91.2

Source: The CSA (CS5 Report), June 2007.

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.

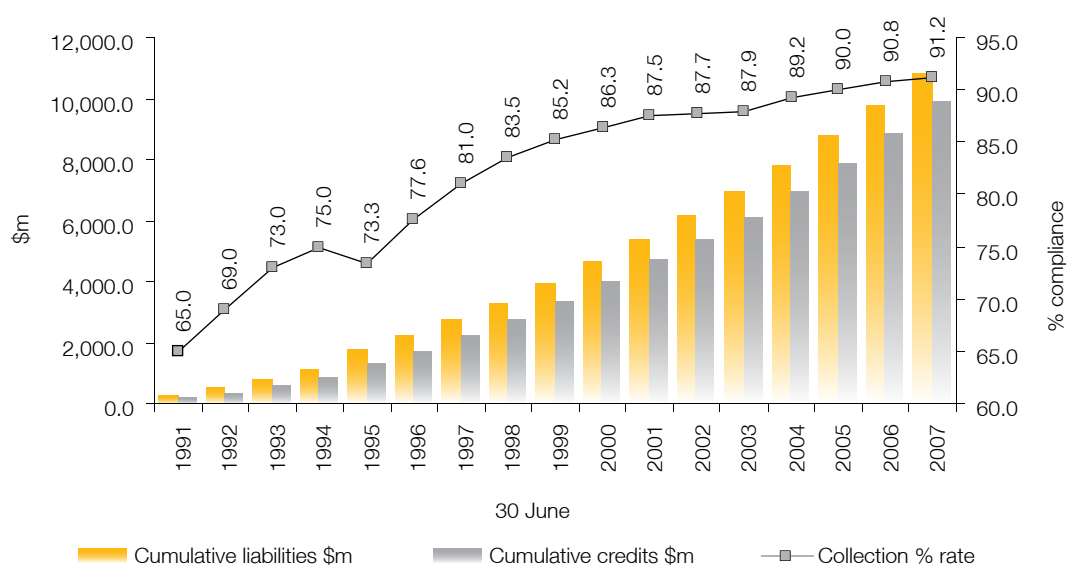
2. The 1991 credit and liability totals include amounts for 1988, 1989 and 1990.

3. Credit rating refers to the percentage of liability that has been met.

Key fact: The crediting rate has been increasing steadily since scheme inception and is currently at over 91 per cent.

The liabilities and collections data in Table 5.5 are also depicted in Chart 5.2.

Chart 5.2: Cumulative liabilities and collections (CSA collect cases) since 1991



Source: The CSA (CS5 Report), June 2007

Chart 5.3 shows the total private collect liabilities for 1993–94 to 2006–07. As receiving parents are able to request collection by CSA if the paying parent fails to meet their obligation it is assumed that the collection rate for privately collected child support is 100 per cent.

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)⁹. The total amount of child support transferred in 2006–07 was \$2,679.1 million, including \$1,702.6 million in private collections and \$976.5 million in funds collected by CSA. This is a \$116 million (4.5 per cent) increase on the ‘transfers’ total of \$2,563.1 million reported in 2005–06 (see Table 5.6 and Chart 5.4).

Parents have met about 96 per cent of all child support liabilities (private collect and CSA collect cases combined). This represents almost \$23 billion since 1988.

9. FaHCSIA policy assumes, for the purposes of calculating FTB(A), that all the child support is transferred between private collect parents. Consequently CSA also makes this assumption. It is acknowledged, however, that parents may agree on lesser amounts to reflect payments in kind or emotional trade-offs. Currently FaHCSIA is sponsoring research to better understand these payment trade-offs.

Chart 5.3: private collect liabilities since 1993-94

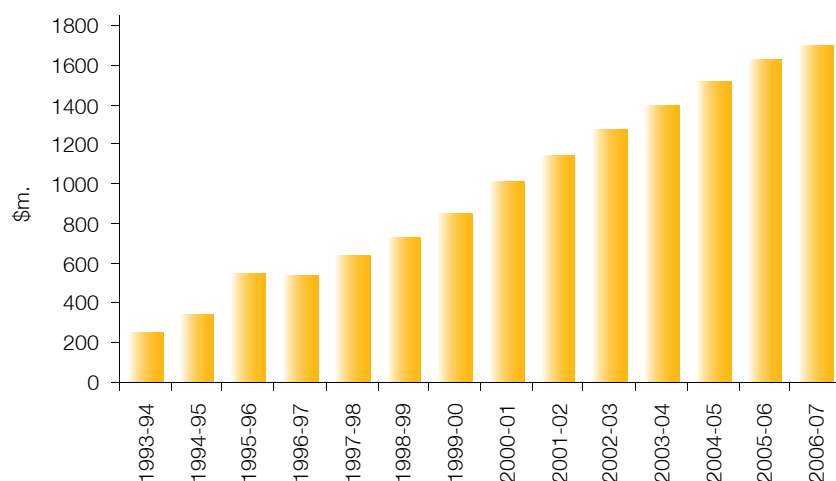


Table 5.6: Transfers (\$m)

30 June	CSA collect ¹		Private collect ²		Total
	\$	%	\$	%	\$
1994	274	52.0	253	48.0	527
1995	327	48.6	347	51.4	674
1996	389	41.5	548	58.5	937
1997	458	46.2	534	53.8	992
1998	526	45.3	637	54.7	1,163
1999	571	44.0	728	56.0	1,299
2000	598	41.3	849	58.7	1,447
2001	619	37.9	1,014	62.1	1,633
2002	636	35.8	1,142	64.2	1,778
2003	672	34.6	1,272	65.4	1,944
2004	791	36.2	1,396	63.8	2,187
2005	866	36.4	1,513	63.6	2,379
2006	932	36.4	1,631	63.6	2,563
2007	977	36.5	1,702	63.5	2,679

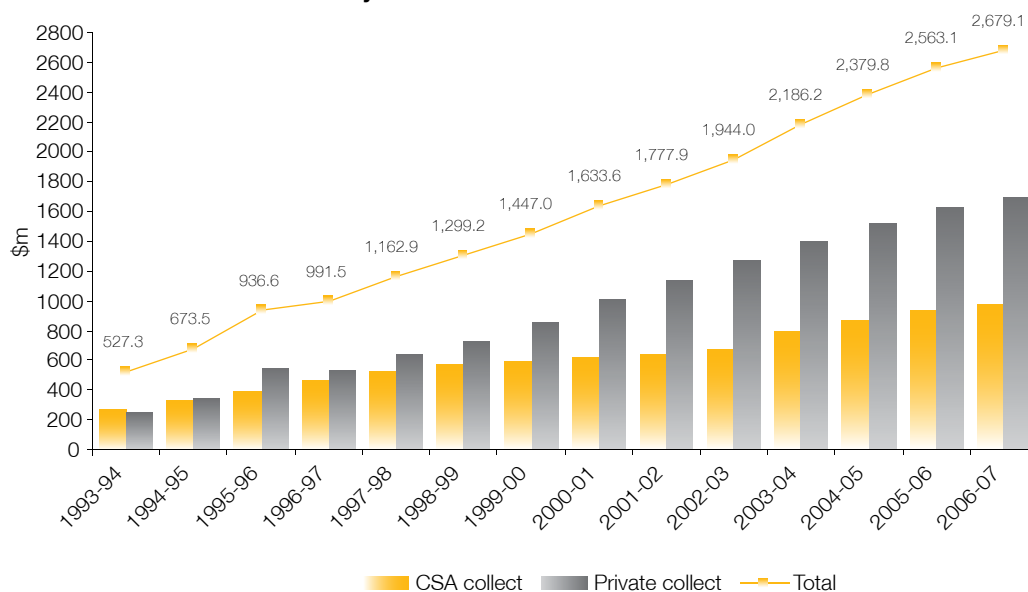
Source: The CSA (CS5 report), June 2007.

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 receiving parent is entitled to ask the CSA to collect the liability.

Key fact: Parents have met about 96 per cent of all child support liabilities (private collect and CSA collect cases combined). This represents almost \$23 billion since 1988.

Chart 5.4: CSA transfers by collection method



Source: The CSA (CS5 Report), June 2007.

5.2.3 Collections—CSA collect cases

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

- Employer withholding (EW): monies withheld by the paying parent's employer and paid directly to CSA by the employer on the employee's behalf.
- Private payments: monies paid by the paying parent directly to CSA by cheque or money order.
- Tax Refund Intercept Payments (TRIPs): monies intercepted by CSA from a paying parent's tax refund.
- Non-Agency Payments (NAPs): payments made directly to the receiving parent or a third party by the paying parent instead of to 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 private payment component and TRIPs, as a percentage of child support payments, are increasing while the other components are decreasing.

Table 5.7: Child support payments—percentages

30 June	Employer withholding	Private payments 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
2005	41.2	47.2	6.9	4.8
2006	40.6	48.5	6.6	4.3
2007	39.8	48.6	7.3	4.2

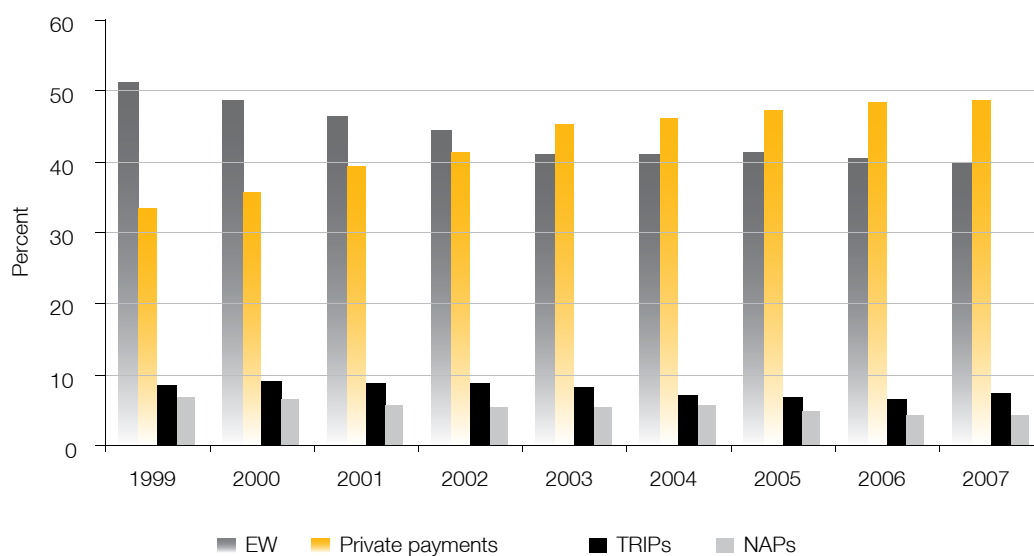
Source: The CSA's Money For Kids (MFK) Report, June 2007.

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 CSA's computer system (Cuba).

2. Private payments in this table include Australia Post (predominantly Billpay), cheques, BPAY, and s72A enforcement payments

Key fact: Private payments, mainly through Australia Post (Billpay) and electronic payment (BPAY), are the most popular way for paying parents to meet their obligations.

Chart 5.5: CSA payments by method



Source: The CSA (MFK Report), June 2007.

5.2.4 Compliance

Tables 5.9, 5.10 and 5.11 compare the levels of compliance among CSA collect customers for the 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 financial years. This is summarised in Table 5.8. From these tables it is evident there are fewer customers (in percentage terms) falling in the 'Paid 0 per cent' (13.2 per cent in 2004-05 and 12.0 per cent in 2006-07). In particular, it will be noted from the three tables that the percentage of CSA collect paying parents who paid over 75 per cent has increased from 66.4 per cent in 2004-05 to 67.4 per cent in 2006-07.

Table 5.8: Summary—percentages of paying parents by amount paid by paying parent liability (excluding nil liabilities)^{1,2}

Paying parent liability ³ (\$A)	Paid 0 %			Paid over 75 %		
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
< min	25.4	24.4	19.4	63.0	63.9	66.4
>min-1,000	9.1	7.7	11.9	61.0	66.0	58.5
1,001-2,000	12.7	11.8	11.6	58.4	59.1	58.9
2,001-3,000	8.1	7.7	9.9	66.2	66.4	63.9
3,001-4,000	5.7	5.3	6.4	71.9	71.8	69.4
4,001-5,000	4.1	3.8	4.1	75.1	75.2	74.3
5,001-10,000	3.7	3.4	4.1	77.9	77.6	76.9
10,001-30,000	4.4	4.9	4.7	73.8	73.4	74.7
30,001 +	16.5	18.0	23.4	40.4	41.5	22.5
Total	13.2	12.0	12.0	66.4	67.6	67.4

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Notes: 1. This table relates to customers rather than cases and excludes those customers who had nil liabilities during the year.

2. The liability and payment amounts used to calculate compliance in these tables refer to the entire twelve months covered by each table column, not for the life of the Scheme.

3. The minimum liability for 2004-05 and 2005-06 was \$260 and for 2006-07 was \$320 or \$333, depending on the start date of the child support period.

Key fact: Since 2004-5 more parents have paid more than 75 per cent of their liability and less parents have paid zero per cent of their liability.

Table 5.9: Paying parent liability by percentage paid in 2005-06 for CSA collect active customers (excluding nil liabilities), June 2005^{1,2}

Paying parent liability (\$A)	Paid 0%		Paid 1–<25%		Paid 25–<50%		Paid 50–<75%		Paid 75–<100%		Paid 100%		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
< 260	25,472	25.4	2,594	2.6	3,768	3.8	5,293	5.3	12,642	12.6	50,514	50.4	100,283	100.0
261–1,000	4,470	9.1	4,294	8.8	4,932	10.1	5,378	11.0	11,682	23.9	18,138	37.1	48,894	100.0
1,001–2,000	4,207	12.7	4,342	13.1	2,423	7.3	2,773	8.4	5,197	15.7	14,096	42.7	33,038	100.0
2,001–3,000	2,226	8.1	2,866	10.5	1,843	6.7	2,299	8.4	5,579	20.4	12,510	45.8	27,323	100.0
3,001–4,000	1,260	5.7	1,792	8.1	1,405	6.4	1,743	7.9	4,963	22.5	10,904	49.4	22,067	100.0
4,001–5,000	713	4.1	1,343	7.7	950	5.4	1,351	7.7	4,297	24.5	8,866	50.6	17,520	100.0
5,001–10,000	1,570	3.7	2,753	6.4	2,173	5.1	3,014	7.0	10,779	25.1	22,651	52.8	42,940	100.0
10,001–30,000	735	4.4	1,458	8.8	991	6.0	1,158	7.0	4,178	25.2	8,057	48.6	16,577	100.0
30,001 +	124	16.5	211	28.1	67	8.9	46	6.1	109	14.5	195	25.9	752	100.0
Total	40,777	13.2	21,653	7.0	18,552	6.0	23,055	7.5	59,426	19.2	145,931	47.2	309,394	100.0

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2005.

Notes: 1. These tables relate to customers rather than cases and exclude those customers who had nil liabilities during the year.

2. The liability and payment amounts used to calculate compliance in these tables refer to the entire twelve months covered by each table, not for the life of the Scheme.

Table 5.10: Paying parent liability by percentage paid in 2005-06 for CSA collect active customers (excluding nil liabilities), June 2006^{1,2}

Paying parent liability (\$A)	Paid 0%		Paid 1–<25%		Paid 25–<50%		Paid 50–<75%		Paid 75–<100%		Paid 100%		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
< 260	23,681	24.4	2,397	2.5	3,574	3.7	5,329	5.5	12,815	13.2	49,076	50.7	96,872	100.0
261–1,000	4,436	7.7	3,519	6.1	5,506	9.6	6,091	10.6	18,341	31.9	19,618	34.1	57,511	100.0
1,001–2,000	3,931	11.8	4,419	13.3	2,456	7.4	2,820	8.5	5,781	17.4	13,877	41.7	33,284	100.0
2,001–3,000	2,078	7.7	2,842	10.5	1,861	6.9	2,310	8.5	5,715	21.1	12,271	45.3	27,077	100.0
3,001–4,000	1,205	5.3	1,958	8.6	1,406	6.2	1,875	8.2	5,513	24.1	10,887	47.7	22,844	100.0
4,001–5,000	703	3.8	1,375	7.5	1,047	5.7	1,427	7.8	4,609	25.1	9,202	50.1	18,363	100.0
5,001–10,000	1,613	3.4	2,968	6.3	2,438	5.2	3,498	7.5	12,428	26.6	23,857	51.0	46,802	100.0
10,001–30,000	965	4.9	1,532	7.8	1,188	6.1	1,544	7.9	4,978	25.4	9,409	48.0	19,616	100.0
30,001 +	176	18.0	275	28.1	68	7.0	53	5.4	144	14.7	262	26.8	978	100.0
Total	38,788	12.0	21,285	6.6	19,544	6.0	24,947	7.7	70,324	21.7	148,459	45.9	323,347	100.0

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2006.

Notes: 1 These tables relate to customers rather than cases and exclude those customers who had nil liabilities during the year.

2 The liability and payment amounts used to calculate compliance in these tables refer to the entire twelve months covered by each table, not for the life of the Scheme.

Table 5.11: Paying parent liability by % paid in 2006-07 for CSA collect active customers (excluding nil liabilities), June 2007^{1,2}

Paying parent liability (\$A)	Paid 0%		Paid 1- <25%		Paid 25- <50%		Paid 50- <75%		Paid 75- <100%		Paid 100%		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
< 333	23,331	19.4	3,599	3.0	5,423	4.5	7,976	6.6	32,900	27.3	47,065	39.1	120,294	100.0
334-1,000	3,897	11.9	2,367	7.2	3,543	10.8	3,766	11.5	5,590	17.1	13,523	41.4	32,686	100.0
1,001-2,000	3,849	11.6	4,284	12.9	2,851	8.6	2,641	8.0	5,523	16.7	13,983	42.2	33,131	100.0
2,001-3,000	2,748	9.9	3,156	11.4	1,843	6.6	2,282	8.2	5,308	19.2	12,378	44.7	27,715	100.0
3,001-4,000	1,505	6.4	2,291	9.8	1,491	6.4	1,899	8.1	4,906	20.9	11,365	48.5	23,457	100.0
4,001-5,000	779	4.1	1,475	7.8	1,101	5.8	1,510	8.0	4,271	22.5	9,835	51.8	18,971	100.0
5,001-10,000	2,003	4.1	3,348	6.8	2,482	5.1	3,485	7.1	11,300	23.0	26,445	53.9	49,063	100.0
10,001-30,000	1,023	4.7	1,719	7.9	1,195	5.5	1,573	7.2	5,077	23.4	11,133	51.3	21,720	100.0
30,001 +	180	23.4	293	38.2	67	8.7	55	7.2	69	9.0	104	13.5	768	100.0
Total	39,315	12.0	22,532	6.9	19,996	6.1	25,187	7.7	74,944	22.9	145,831	44.5	327,805	100.0

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

- Notes:
1. This table relates to customers rather than cases and excludes those customers who had nil liabilities during the year.
 2. The liability and payment amounts used to calculate compliance in these tables refer to the entire twelve months covered by each table, not for the life of the Scheme.

5.2.5 Liabilities and overdue child support—CSA collect cases

Table 5.12 shows the number of paying parents in each income range by the size of Gross Maintenance Debt (GMD) attributable to both current liability cases and cases ended with arrears. The table shows that only 3.2 per cent of paying parents have outstanding child support of greater than \$10,000. The debt associated with these paying parents, however, comprises 55.7 per cent of the total outstanding child support. Of equal note is the \$406.4 million (or 42.7 per cent) of overdue child support associated with paying parents who have child support incomes of \$12,000 or less.

While 67.9 per cent of domestic cases (including private collect cases) in Table 5.13 have no overdue amount, only 29.6 per cent of international cases have no amount of outstanding child support. Only 2.5 per cent of domestic cases have outstanding child support of over \$10,000 but 17.5 per cent of international cases have overdue amounts of over \$10,000.

Table 5.14 shows that 46.5 per cent of domestic paying parents with overdue amounts were in the \$0–12,000 income range, and their overdue amounts accounted for 36.1 per cent of the domestic GMD. This compares with 64.0 per cent of international paying parents with outstanding child support who have incomes of \$12,000 or less and account for 65.9 per cent of the GMD associated with all international cases. Approximately 7.9 per cent of domestic paying parents with overdue amounts had incomes of \$50,000 or higher, and they accounted for 12.6 per cent of the GMD associated with domestic cases. About 5.7 per cent of international paying parents with outstanding child support had incomes of \$50,000 and over, and accounted for 9.3 per cent of the international GMD.

Table 5.12: Paying parent GMD by paying parent child support income, June 2007 (all cases)

Debt (\$)	\$0–12,000		\$12–20,000		\$20–50,000		\$50,000+		Total	
	No.	Sum \$m	No.	Sum \$m	No.	Sum \$m	No.	Sum \$m	No.	Sum \$m
0	117,042	0.0	65,562	0.0	218,738	0.0	127,072	0.0	528,414	0.0
1–333	50,247	5.2	16,372	1.7	17,892	2.3	4,265	0.5	88,776	9.8
334–500	8,424	3.5	2,483	1.0	4,671	1.9	1,205	0.5	16,783	6.9
501–1,000	16,123	11.7	4,311	3.1	9,877	7.2	2,657	1.9	32,968	23.9
1,001–2,000	16,581	23.8	4,198	6.1	11,913	17.3	2,869	4.1	35,561	51.3
2,001–5,000	17,618	56.9	5,132	16.5	16,329	53.1	3,976	13.0	43,055	139.5
5,001–10,000	10,273	72.6	3,015	21.3	10,864	77.7	2,596	18.5	26,748	190.1
10,000+	10,525	232.8	2,215	42.0	9,695	180.8	3,238	74.6	25,673	530.2
Total	246,833	406.4	103,288	91.7	299,979	340.4	147,878	113.2	797,978	951.8
									100.0	100.0

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Note: 1. This table records Gross Maintenance Debt (GMD) associated with all CSA cases, both active cases and those that have ended with arrears.

2. Totals may not add due to rounding. Table includes CSA collect and private collect cases that have ended with arrears.

Table 5.13: Paying parent GMD, Domestic and International, June 2007 (all cases)

Debt (\$)	Paying parent Location													
	Domestic						International						Total	
	No.	No. %	Sum \$m	Sum %	No.	No. %	Sum \$m	Sum %	No.	No. %	Sum \$m	Sum %		
0	517,834	67.9	0.0	0.0	10,580	29.6	0.0	0.0	528,414	66.2	0.0	0.0		
1–333	84,892	11.1	9.3	1.3	3,884	10.9	0.5	0.2	88,776	11.1	9.8	1.0		
334–500	15,756	2.1	6.5	0.9	1,027	2.9	0.4	0.2	16,783	2.1	6.9	0.7		
501–1,000	30,466	4.0	22.1	3.0	2,502	7.0	1.8	0.9	32,968	4.1	23.9	2.5		
1,001–2,000	32,058	4.2	46.2	6.2	3,503	9.8	5.1	2.4	35,561	4.5	51.3	5.4		
2,001–5,000	38,614	5.1	124.8	16.8	4,441	12.4	14.7	7.0	43,055	5.4	139.5	14.7		
5,001–10,000	23,143	3.0	163.8	22.1	3,605	10.1	26.2	12.5	26,748	3.4	190.1	20.0		
10,000+	19,425	2.5	369.1	49.8	6,248	17.5	161.1	76.8	25,673	3.2	530.2	55.7		
Total	762,188	100.0	741.9	100.0	35,790	100.0	209.9	100.0	797,978	100.0	951.8	100.0		

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.

Note: 1. This table records Gross Maintenance Debt (GMD) associated with all CSA cases, both active cases and those that have ended with arrears.
2. Totals may not add due to rounding. Table includes CSA collect and private collect cases that have ended with arrears.

Table 5.14: Paying parent GMD for paying parents with overdue amounts only, June 2007

Total paying parent income (\$)	Paying parent Location									
	Domestic					International				
	No.	Sum \$m	No.	Sum \$m	No.	Sum \$m	No.	Sum \$m	No.	%
0-12,000	113,649	46.5	268.1	36.1	16,142	64.0	138.4	65.9	129,791	48.1
12,000-20,000	36,243	14.8	84.9	11.4	1,483	5.9	6.9	3.3	37,726	14.0
20,000-50,000	75,090	30.7	295.2	39.8	6,151	24.4	45.2	21.5	81,241	30.1
50,000+	19,372	7.9	93.7	12.6	1,434	5.7	19.5	9.3	20,806	7.7
Total	244,354	100.0	741.9	100.0	25,210	100.0	209.9	100.0	269,564	100.0
										951.8
										100.0
										11.9
										35.8
										9.6
										42.7

Source: The CSA (customer research extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2007.
Note: 1. This table records Gross Maintenance Debt (GMD) associated with all CSA cases, both active cases and those that have ended with arrears.
2. Totals may not add due to rounding. Table includes CSA collect and private collect cases that have ended with arrears.

5.2.6 Overdue child support—CSA collect cases

Table 5.15 and Chart 5.6 record Scheme arrears amounts as at the end of the past ten financial years. Column A in Table 5.14 records Cumulative Net Maintenance Debt (NMD). Column B records write-off amounts (debt deemed to be currently uncollectable) while Column C reports Cumulative 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 indicated that GMD increased between 1999 and 2004 as a result of three key factors: an increased number of overseas cases that came to Australia with large outstanding amounts; an increase in overdue child support associated with cases that had a minimum liability; and because of the rate of growth in the total caseload. More recently GMD has begun to increase as a consequence of other factors including greater customer demand for particular services, indexation of the minimum assessment (i.e. \$260 p.a. to \$320 p.a.) and increased liabilities due to more effective enforcement action, particularly in relation to taxation lodgement enforcement and parents involved in income minimisation. Whilst these enforcement actions have led to increased collections, they have also significantly contributed to growth in outstanding child support.

Table 5.15: Child Support GMD and its components

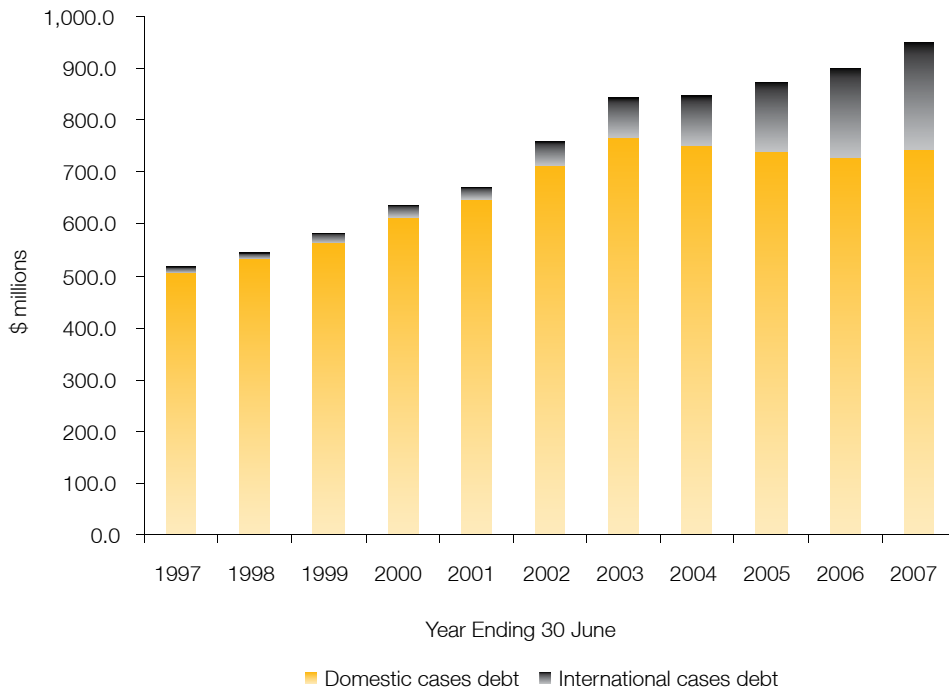
30 June	A. Cumulative Net Maintenance Debt (\$m)	B. Write-Off (\$m)	C. Cumulative GMD (GMD) (\$m)	D. Cumulative GMD on Domestic Cases (\$m)	E. Cumulative GMD on Overseas Cases (\$m)	F. Cumulative GMD on Overseas Cases as % of Total GMD
1997	458.4	58.2	516.6	506.7	9.9	1.9
1998	450.3	94.0	544.3	532.2	12.1	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
2005	790.4	81.7	872.2	738.8	133.4	15.3
2006	801.2	98.3	899.5	729.7	169.8	18.9
2007	854.0	97.8	951.8	741.9	209.9	22.1

Source: The CSA's COGNOS (CS5) Report, June 2007.

Notes: Totals may not add due to rounding

Key fact: More recently GMD has begun to increase as a consequence of other factors including greater customer demand for particular services, indexation of the minimum assessment (i.e. \$260 p.a. to \$320 p.a.) and increased liabilities due to more effective enforcement action, particularly in relation to taxation lodgement enforcement and parents involved in income minimisation.

Chart 5.6: Gross Maintenance Debt and its components



Total cumulative GMD increased by \$52.3 million (5.8 per cent) between June 2006 and June 2007. This compares with an increase of \$27.3 million (3.1 per cent) in the previous financial year. The majority of the increase in total cumulative GMD was associated with international debt. International debt has increased by \$40.1 million while domestic debt has increased by \$12.2m. Domestic debt has increased from \$729.7 million at June 2006 to \$741.9 million at June 2007. At the same time international debt has increased 23.6 per cent from \$169.8 million to \$209.9 million.

Chart 5.7: Cumulative liabilities, credits and debt for CSA collect cases 1995-2007

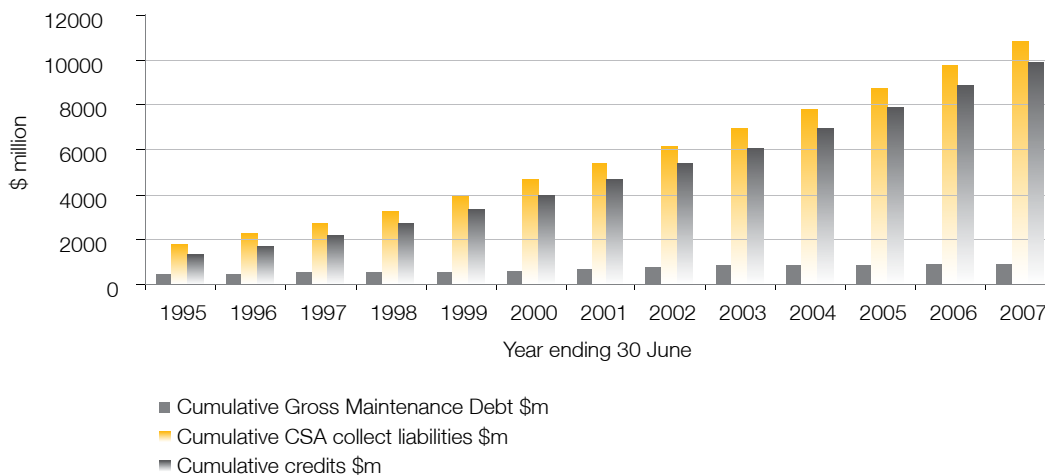


Chart 5.8: Domestic Gross Maintenance Debt from June 2002

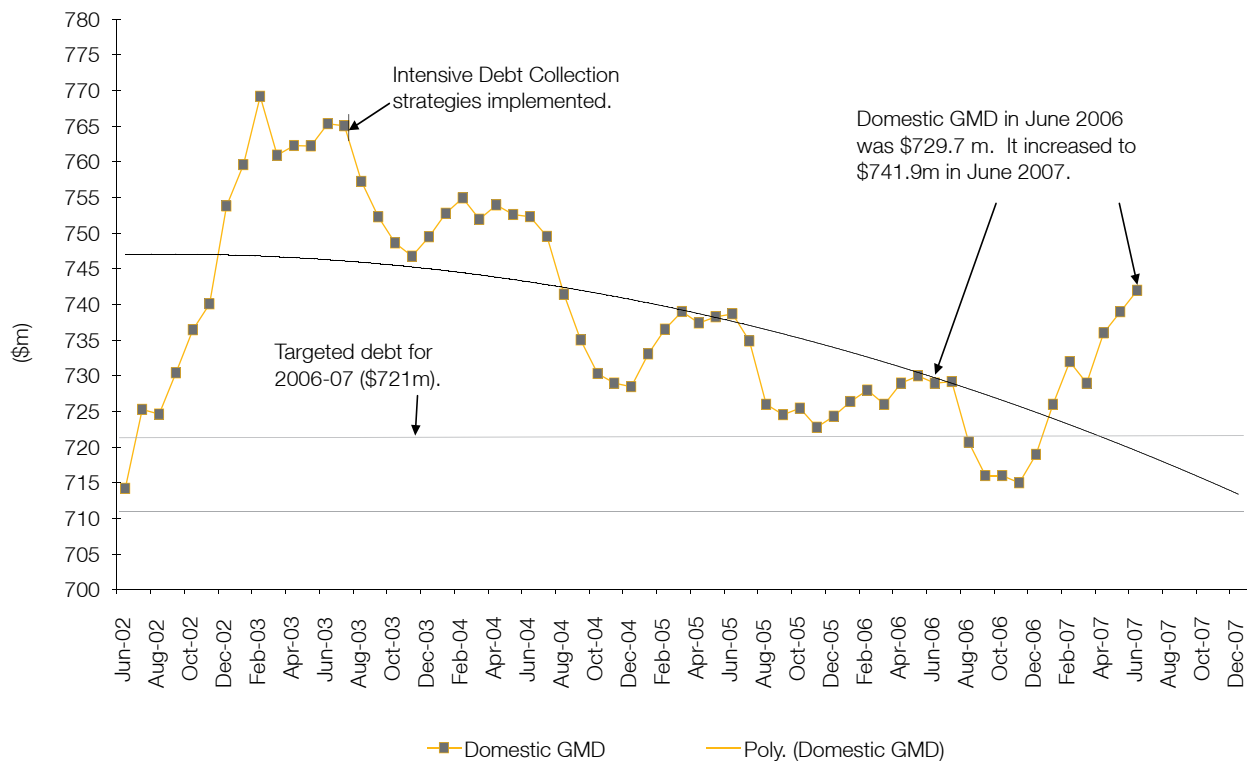


Chart 5.8 shows a decline in the overall growth rate in domestic GMD between 2002-03 and 2006-07. This confirmed the effectiveness of the CSA's debt reduction strategies for that period. In June 2003, before the introduction of the Intensive Debt Collection strategy, domestic GMD stood at \$765.4 million and by June 2007 it had reduced by \$23.5 million to \$741.9 million. Growth in liabilities due to a range of factors, including more accurate assessment of real parental resources, has led to a small increase in domestic debt during 2006-07 to \$741.9 million.



6.0 Legal Services Program overview

6.1 Background

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

The program aims to provide information, legal advice, minor assistance, and, when appropriate, legal representation to low income parents and those with special needs (particularly Centrelink customers) to ensure that children with separated parents benefit from the Child Support Scheme.

Legal Aid commissions in each State and Territory, and thirteen specialist community legal centres (CLCs) 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 customers about what is involved in attending court
- assistance with establishing proof of parentage
- assisting customers interpret child support documents from other government bodies
- assisting stage 2 customers 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 customers understand their rights of appeal under the change of assessment arrangements
- assisting customers interpret their child support obligations
- assisting with preparing and completing legal documents
- advising self-representing customers about what is involved in attending court and
- court representation as appropriate.

Legal Aid commissions expend funds on child support matters in accordance with Commonwealth priorities and guidelines as set out in agreements with the States and Territories and legal aid commissions.

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

Australian government funding for child support matters is also provided through the Community Legal Services Program to thirteen centres in Australia which provide specialist child support legal services to customers. In the 2006–07 financial year the total allocation was \$1.42m.

6.2 Statistics and advice work types

6.2.1 Community legal services program statistics 2006–2007

During 2006–07 community legal centres recorded the following activities for child support matters:

Advice	2,081
Cases opened	615
Cases closed	651
Community legal action	8
Law reform and legal policy	2

Additional child support information collected by community legal services relating to child support activities for 2006–07:

Total clients with a child support problem2,320

Parent type:

Receiving (only)936

Paying (only)449

Both paying and receiving84

Stages:

Stage 1133

Stage 22,163

Both Stage 1 and 222

Number of matters requiring DNA testing257

Number of matters involving applications for departures12

Number of other applications for child support issues76

Age of client:

Less than 18 years18

18–34 years495

35–49 years808

Over 50 years161

Income scale:

Low income (\$26,000 or less per year)1,144

Medium income (between \$26,000 and \$52,000 per year)283

High income (more than \$52,000 per year)36



7.0 Savings and costs

7.1 Savings

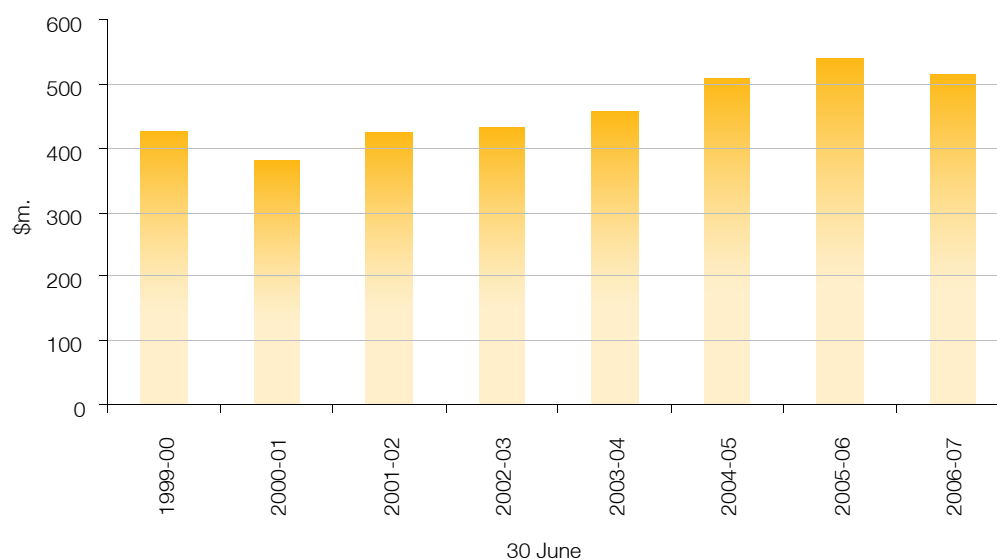
Savings to government outlays are achieved as a result of the application of the maintenance income test to payments of more than base rate Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A. For the 2006-07 year, payments of more than the base rate Family Tax Benefit Part A are reduced by 50 cents for each dollar of maintenance received above \$1,215.45 per annum for a single 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

1999–2000	2000–01 \$m	2001–02 \$m	2002–03 \$m	2003–04 \$m	2004–05 \$m	2005– 06 \$m	2006–07 \$m
425.0	380.4	423.0	433.5	458.0	510.0	539.0	515.0

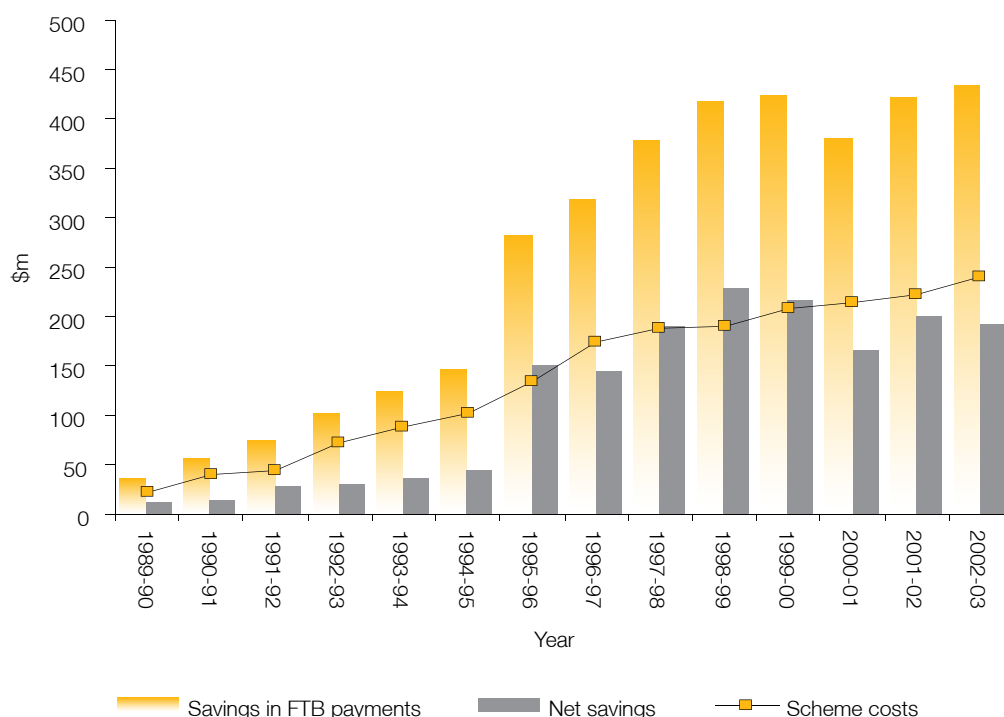
Source: FaHCSIA, June 2007.

Chart 7.1: Total savings attributable to the Child Support Scheme



Source: FaHCSIA, June 2007.

Chart 7.2: Savings and costs of the Child Support Scheme



Source: The CSA monthly performance report (CS5), CSA, June 2006.

7.2 Scheme costs

Table 7.2: Savings and costs of the Child Support Scheme¹

Agency/ Dept.	1999-00 \$m	2000-01 \$m	2001-02 \$m	2002-03 \$m	2003-04 \$m	2004-05 \$m	2005-06 \$m	2006-07 \$m
CSA	198.2	203.7	214.0	233.2	257.4	274.7	278.0	299.4
FaHCSIA	3.0	2.3	2.3	1.4	1.5	n/a	3.0	3.0
AG's	7.8	7.8	5.3	5.5 ²	5.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Scheme costs	209.0	213.8	221.6	240.1	264.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Savings in FaHCSIA pay't	425	380	423	433.5	458.0	510.0	539.0	515.0
Net savings³	216	166	201	193	194	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: The CSA, FaHCSIA and Attorney-General's (AG's) Department.

- Notes:
1. 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 collect customers.
 2. 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.
 3. Net savings equals net savings to government outlays minus Scheme costs.



8.0 CSA people and performance

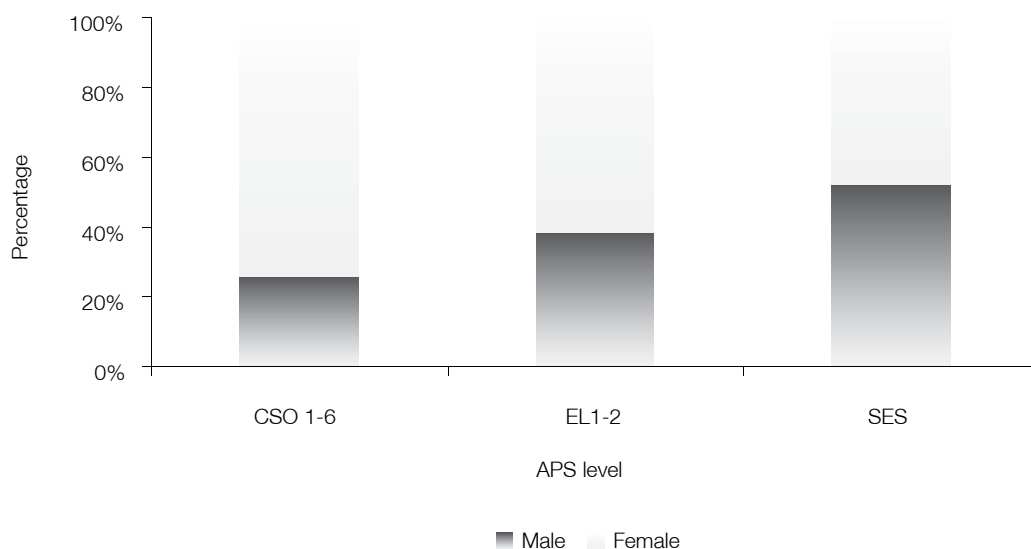
At the end of June 2007 there were 3,976.8 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff in CSA. This is a 524.8 FTE (15.2 per cent) increase from June 2006.

Table 8.1: CSA staff by region and Australian Public Service (APS) Level, June 2007

Region	APS level			Total
	CSO 1-6	EL1-2	SES	
National office	326.8	288.0	22.8	637.6
NSW/ACT	977.8	46.2	2.0	1,026.0
QLD	687.2	31.4	1.0	719.6
SA/NT	255.5	9.6		265.1
VIC/TAS	925.8	41.5	2.0	969.3
WA	338.4	19.8	1.0	359.2
Total	3,511.5	436.5	28.8	3,976.8

Key fact: Staff full-time equivalents have increased by more than 15 per cent since 2005–06 as CSA engages more staff to implement the Scheme reforms.

Chart 8.1: Percentage of total CSA staff by gender

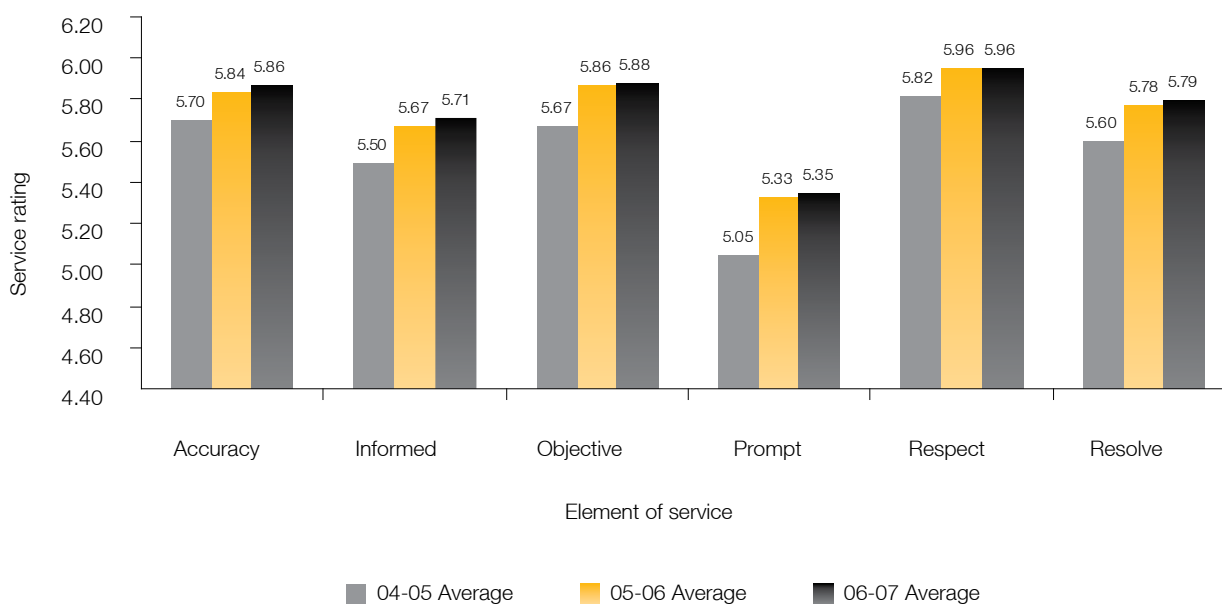


8.1 CSA customer service satisfaction

Customers Having a Say (CHAS) is a point-of-service customer satisfaction survey CSA carries out with its customers. CHAS measures satisfaction with the service provided by CSA staff during a specific telephone interaction. It is delivered via an interactive telephone survey offered to a large representative of CSA customers who contact the Agency by telephone. Approximately 3,000 customers participate in the CHAS survey each month.

CHAS measures customer satisfaction with six elements of service: accuracy, clarity of information (informed), objectivity (objective), promptness (prompt), respectfulness (respect) and resolution of issues (resolve). Several questions are asked in relation to each element, and rated on a seven-point scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied). Each month, independent consultants analyse the results and report to CSA.

Chart 8.2: Customer satisfaction with elements of service 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007



Key fact: Approximately 3,000 customers participate in the CHAS survey each month.

8.2 CSA telephone performance

Research has established that CSA customers prefer communicating by telephone. Recognising this fact, 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 8.2: CSA telephone statistics

30 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
2005	8,973	96.9% in 2 mins 89.6% in 30 secs	7,916	16,889
2006	10,896	96.6% in 2 mins 89.3% in 30 secs	8,735	19,631
2007	9,178	94.7% in 2 mins 84.6% in 30 secs	7,966	17,143

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 seven days per week. In this instance, however, calls have been calculated on a daily basis using the following method. In 2006–07 there were 2.07 million calls 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 7,966. 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.



9.0 Increased support for parents

9.1 CSA support products

Separation can be a difficult and confusing time—that's why CSA has produced a series of free booklets that families can read in their own time:

- *Me and My Kids*: contains practical information about staying involved with your children after separation.
- *Me and My Money*: addresses the challenges that arise around money issues that follow separation and provides budgeting tips.
- *What about Me*: is for anyone who wants information about looking after themselves and their children during and after separation.
- *Me, My Kids and My Ex*: provides tips on how to achieve a business-like relationship with your ex in order to have a quality ongoing relationship with your children.
- *Me and My Changing Family*: is for people who are thinking about starting or are already in a new relationship and are looking for tips on making it easier.
- *Family Separation: a guide for teens*—guiding teens through the emotions and changes that can happen when a family separates.

In addition to the Me and My books, the interactive *Separation CD-Rom* shares real people's experiences, tips and tools on how to deal with separation.

To order copies—or view the range of other products available—visit the CSA website at **www.csa.gov.au** or call **1800 040 972**.

9.2 Online services

CSAonline is an easy and convenient way for customers to access CSA via a secure internet service. CSAonline gives parents greater choice and flexibility about how they interact with CSA and reduces the impact on the environment by limiting paper correspondence.

Since its launch in April 2006, over 60,000 customers have signed up.

CSAonline customers are able to:

- view account details
- access and send information securely
- view and update personal CSA details
- view and print selected letters
- advise CSA of any change in the care arrangements for children
- advise CSA of any changes to income
- complete an enquiry form to get in touch with CSA.

CSA is evaluating what online services can be provided to international customers in 2007-08.

To enrol go to **www.csa.gov.au**, select CSAonline and follow the prompts or contact the CSAonline Help Desk on **1800 637 445**.

APPENDIX 1: Contact details

Parents are able to obtain information from the CSA, Centrelink and legal service providers on the following numbers. Alternatively, the CSA Community Services Directory lists providers located across Australia. Details of services in your area can be accessed on CSA's website www.csa.gov.au or by calling **131 272**.

Child Support Agency

General enquiries	13 1272
CSA info service (IVR automated service for quick account enquiries and general information)	13 1107
Child Support change of assessment	13 1141
CSA complaints	13 2919
Website	www.csa.gov.au
Publication ordering	1800 040 972

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
Retirements 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

Other government departments

Medicare	132 011
FaHCSIA	1300 653 227
Family Assistance Office	136 150
Family Court of Australia	
Website	www.familycourt.gov.au
Phone	1300 352 000
Family Court of Western Australia	08 9224 8222

Other support services

Family Relationship Services

Family Relationship Centres	www.familyrelationships.gov.au
Family Relationship Advice Line	1800 050 321
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 551 800

Financial counselling services are available in each state

Australian Capital Territory	02 6257 1788
New South Wales	1800 808 488
Victoria	03 9614 5433
Tasmania	03 6223 4595
Western Australia	08 9221 9411
Northern Territory	08 8932 6111
Queensland	07 3257 1957
South Australia	08 8202 5182

Family Law

Federal Magistrates Court of Australia	1300 352 000
Website	www.fmc.gov.au
Family Law Hotline	1800 050 321

Legal Aid

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.

ACT (02) 6243 3471 www.legalaid.canberra.net.au	WA 1300 650 579 www.legalaid.wa.gov.au
NSW 1800 451 784 www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au	NT 1800 019 343 www.ntlac.nt.gov.au
VIC 1800 677 402 www.legalaid.vic.gov.au	QLD 1300 651 188 www.legalaid.qld.gov.au
TAS 1300 366 611 www.legalaid.tas.gov.au	SA 1300 366424 www.lsc.sa.gov.au

APPENDIX 2: Amounts used in child support assessments

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Liable Parent's Exempted Income Amount	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Single yearly rate of pension (no relevant dependents)	10,219	10,482	11,271	11,740	12,315	12,950	13,462	13,983	14,646
Twice married pension rate (with relevant dependents)	17,051	17,498	18,813	19,597	20,557	21,622	22,480	23,349	24,464
Additional amount for child under 13 at end of child support year	1,958	2,018	2,049	2,169	2,235	2,307	2,362	2,424	2,489
Additional amount for child 13–15 at end of child support year	2,733	2,813	2,857	3,025	3,119	3,219	3,296	3,380	3,504
Additional amount for child 16 or over at end of child support year.	3,875	3,977	4,276	4,454	4,672	4,914	5,109	5,307	5,560
Resident Parent's Disregarded Income Amount									
Yearly equivalent of average weekly earnings	31,351	31,699	33,717	35,012	36,213	38,168	39,312	41,881	43,654
Other Amounts									
Yearly equivalent of 2.5 times AWE (Paying parents income cap before 1 July 2006)	101,153	103,103	108,732	113,542	119,470	126,659	130,767	139,347	n/a1
2.5 x all employees average earnings (Paying parents income cap from 1 July 2006)							98,280	104,702	109,135
Inflation factor	1.040	1.0375	1.0375	1.0375	1.0375	1.0400	1.0400	1.0620	1.0270
Weekly Protected Earnings Rate (for the period 1 Jan to 31 Dec)	218.85	221.03	237.3	246.68	253.58	260.48	267.00	273.75	284.85

Note 1. No longer applicable from 1 July 2006 .

