



Australian Government
Child Support Agency

Facts and Figures

08–09



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are welcomed and should
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Child Support Scheme – key facts and figures

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	% Change
Child Support transfers				
CSA collect	\$0.98bn	\$1.03bn	\$1.09bn	5.83
Private collect ¹	\$1.70bn	\$1.79bn	\$1.70bn	-5.03
Total ²	\$2.68bn	\$2.82bn	\$2.79bn	-1.06
CSA collect cases performance since inception				
Total liabilities credited	\$9.90bn	\$10.97bn	\$12.11bn	10.39
Total liabilities	\$10.85bn	\$11.99bn	\$13.20bn	10.09
Percentage liabilities credited	91.2%	91.5%	91.8%	0.33
Average annual liabilities per case:				
Administratively assessed CSA collect cases	\$5,038.56	\$5,351.21	\$4,687.17	-12.41
Administratively assessed private collect cases	\$6,611.41	\$6,916.79	\$5,799.88	-16.15
CSA caseload payment method				
Total cases ³	797,978	804,149	827,761	2.94
% CSA collect ⁴	47.4%	47.9%	46.8%	-2.30
% Private collect ⁴	52.6%	52.1%	53.2%	2.11
CSA caseload:				
Formula assessment	786,415	794,315	818,948	3.10
Eligible children	1,130,042	1,125,554	1,153,151	2.45
CSA customer numbers:				
Paying parents	735,758	739,112	760,372	2.88
Receiving parents	735,304	739,645	759,905	2.74
Total	1,471,062	1,478,757	1,520,277	2.81
CSA costs: ⁵	\$290.9m	\$298.5m	\$426.5m	n/a
Dollars transferred by CSA for each dollar spent ⁶	\$8.99	\$9.35	\$6.54	n/a
Cost to transfer each CSA collect dollar ⁶	23.5 cents	22.3 cents	34.6 cents	n/a
Cost to transfer each private collect dollar ⁶	4.3 cents	4.2 cents	3.0 cents	n/a

Notes:

- These figures assume that private collect parents transfer all their liability.
- The private collect component of this figure is subject to retrospective adjustments.
- All cases (active cases and cases ended with arrears) are included in these totals.
- Percentages in these rows are calculated using active caseload totals (excluding cases ended with arrears).
- Up to and including 2007-08 CSA funding figures in this table do not include new policy initiative funding. From 2008-09 the CSA funding amounts do include ongoing new policy proposal (Ongoing NPP) funds but do not include Terminating NPP funds. The 2008-09 funding figure, therefore, is not comparable with earlier years. The methodology now used to calculate cost to collect a \$ and \$s collected for each \$ spent is believed to be more in line with the financial reporting requirements placed on the department.
- The 2008-09 figures are not comparable with earlier years owing to a change in the definition of CSA costs, as well as the methodology used to create these figures.

Introduction

This report is the 13th edition of *Child Support Scheme Facts and Figures* and is an annual publication released jointly by Australian Government agencies and departments with responsibilities under the Child Support Scheme.

This year all references to Stage 1 and Stage 2 cases have been removed from this publication to avoid confusion with three stages of reforms to the Child Support Scheme introduced between 1 July 2006 and 1 July 2008 (referred to as Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3). In addition, Stage 1 cases now represent a very small proportion of the overall caseload and distinguishing between Stage 1 cases with their court-based orders and Stage 2 cases with their administrative assessments has become less necessary. Tables in this publication now refer to cases that have been administratively assessed, rather than Stage 2 cases.

The tables in this publication contain data for all cases, unless otherwise labelled. All cases refer to active cases with a current assessment and cases that have ended with arrears. Approximately 40,000 “mirror” cases are also included in the total caseload figure. “Mirror” cases are a result of the 2006-2008 Scheme reforms and were created to accommodate customers who changed from a paying to receiving parent role or vice versa. The Child Support Agency (CSA) maintains two cases in these instances so it can determine who owes child support to whom.

It will also be noted that in this edition there are an increasing number of tables broken up into domestic and international cases, as there are a growing number of international cases in the caseload. In 2000 the Scheme was expanded to allow for implementation of international arrangements in relation to recovery of child support. These enabled domestic child support liabilities to be transferred to overseas reciprocating jurisdictions for collection, and for overseas liabilities to be transferred into Australia for collection by CSA.

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 Child Support Scheme aims to balance the interests of both parents and focus on the needs and costs of children in order to:

- reduce conflict between parents about parenting arrangements
- encourage shared parental responsibility, and
- ensure child support is paid in full and on time.

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 establishing 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 implemented the Child Support Scheme in two stages.

The first stage 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. The second stage 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. This administrative assessment applied only to parents who separated on or after 1 October 1989, or who had a child born on or after that date.

This is the first issue of Facts and Figures that includes data only from the new Child Support Scheme that was introduced on 1 July 2008 (see details below).

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

1.3 Child Support Scheme Reforms 2006-08

Between 1 July 2006 and 1 July 2008, the Australian Government progressively implemented changes to the Child Support Scheme in three stages. Major changes to the Scheme, including changes to the child support formula, started on 1 July 2008.

In changing the Scheme, the Government accepted the recommendations in the report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support,² chaired by Professor Patrick Parkinson (released in May 2005). This review was initiated in response to a recommendation in the House of Representatives Committee on the Family and Community Affairs report on child custody arrangements in the event of family separation. This report was titled, *Every Picture Tells a Story*,³ and was released in December 2003.

The changes built on the Government's reform of the family law system to encourage shared parenting and reduce conflict. This complements the commitment of nearly \$400 million over four years to establish the Family Relationship Advice Line (FRAL) and the network of Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) and related services in the community. The services began operating on 1 July 2006 and the CSA has been referring customers ever since.

The changes to the Child Support Scheme occurred in three stages.

Stage one: 1 July 2006

- Recognised the costs incurred by non-resident parents on income support who have contact with their children— these parents can receive “with child” rate of certain income support payments
- Introduced clearer guidelines to assess parents’ ability to earn money
- Reduced payments for people with the highest child support rate to make sure payments better reflect the actual costs of children
- Enabled non-resident parents to spend a greater percentage of their payments directly on their children (up to 30 per cent of the child support assessment)
- Increased minimum payment from \$5 a week to approximately \$6 a week to ensure child support payments kept pace with inflation.

Stage two, phase one: 1 January 2007

- Introduced independent review of the CSA's decisions by the Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT). Before this change, parents who were unhappy with the CSA's decisions could only appeal to the courts, which could be expensive and time-consuming
- Simplified the relationship between the courts and the new Child Support Scheme by:
 - Making it possible for parents to take their own court action to recover any outstanding child support debts while the CSA continued to collect ongoing payments
 - Increasing the power of courts in determining child support matters
 - Increasing the court's power to make temporary arrangements for child support matters
 - Generally limited Change of Assessment (CoA) decisions and departure orders made by a court to the previous 18 months
 - Giving separating parents 13 weeks instead of 28 days to work out parenting arrangements for the family before their Family Tax Benefit Part A is affected, and
 - Improving and simplifying the processes for parents who dispute a child's parentage.

2. Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support, *In the Best Interests of Children – Reforming the Child Support Scheme*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, May 2005..
3. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs, *Every Picture Tells a Story*, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, December 2003.

Stage two, phase two: 1 January 2008

- Recognition of relevant dependent children aged 18 and over:
- CSA customers can apply to extend the time (until the end of the school year) a relevant dependent child is taken into account in their child support assessment, if the child will turn 18 during that year and is still in full-time secondary education
- A paying parent can apply to have their relevant dependent child taken into account in their child support assessment from the date the assessment started if they advise CSA within 28 days of the notice of assessment being issued to them and the notice was issued after 4 December 2007
- Changes to income amount orders and estimates:
 - The definition of an income amount order has changed to provide customers with an increased opportunity to lodge an estimate of income
 - The estimate provisions have changed to allow customers to lodge an estimate for the remainder of the child support period, after an income amount order expires.
- Objections to CSA decisions:
 - Parents can apply for an extension of time to submit an objection over the phone as well as in writing
 - Paying parents can object to the acceptance of the other parent's application for a child support assessment
 - The CSA is not required to provide a copy of the objection and accompanying documents to the other parent where the objection is about a departure determination (under Part 6A) and if the CSA is satisfied the rights of the other parent will not be affected by any decision made by the CSA.
- Other changes:
 - Garnishee (72A) notices (notices requiring employers or financial institutions to deduct child support) can be issued for less than the total amount of outstanding child support
 - Assessment notices have been amended to include only age ranges of relevant dependent children and liable children from other cases
 - The range of debts collectable via tax refund intercepts has been extended
 - The rental property definition has been updated.

Stage three: 1 July 2008

- A new and more balanced way of working out child support amounts based on recent Australian research on the costs of caring for children, and taking account of both parents' incomes after self support amounts are deducted
- More flexible arrangements, with better protection for parents who want to make agreements between themselves about the payment of child support and the treatment of lump sum payments
- More equal treatment of children from first and second families
- Where a paying parent has a minimum assessment and more than one case, child support will be paid for each case, not divided between them
- Changes to the treatment of overtime and second jobs where needed for re-establishment costs.

1.4 The child support formula (from 1 July 2008)

Prior to 1 July 2008 child support in Australia was based on the paying parent's taxable income and any supplementary income amounts such as rental property losses – this was known as the paying parent's child support income.

From 1 July 2008, the CSA has made administrative assessments for child support based on a new legislative formula. This edition of *Facts and Figures* (2008-2009) includes data and tables significantly different from previous issues as the data is now based on the new child support formula.

The CSA uses this formula to calculate the annual rate of child support payable under an administrative assessment unless:

- the assessment is varied by a departure order or by a court order
- the assessment is varied by a Change of Assessment (CoA) decision, or
- the assessment is varied by the provisions of a child support agreement.

For more information see section 35A of the *Child Support Assessment Act 1989*.

The key components of the formula are:

- the costs of raising children, based on independent research
- both parents' incomes are taken into account and considered equally
- the same self-support amount is deducted from each parent's income before child support is worked out (child support income)
- the level of care each parent provides is taken into account, and
- children from first and subsequent families are treated in a similar way.

Each parent's income is considered in the same way and combined to work out the costs of the children. Each parent's share of the total income shows how much of the children's costs they should meet.

The annual rate of child support payable is calculated using one of six variations of the formula (section 35B). In most cases, the basic formula is used. The formula is, however, flexible and takes into account many different family circumstances.

The six variations of the formula are:

- single child support case i.e. the basic formula (section 35)
- single child support case, non parent-carer (section 36)
- one or both parents have multiple child support cases (section 37)
- parent has multiple child support cases and non-parent carer for one or more children (section 38)
- non-parent-carer, one parent not assessed because they are not a resident of Australia or there are special circumstances (section 39), and
- non-parent carer, one parent deceased (section 40).

A detailed description of the new formulas can be found on the CSA website www.csa.gov.au

1.5 The role of Government departments in the administration of the Child Support Scheme

1.5.1 The Department of Human Services

In October 2004, the CSA became part of the Australian Government's Department of Human Services.

The Department, which includes CSA and CRS Australia, focuses on the development of service delivery policy and on the delivery of high quality, efficient and effective services to the Australian people, particularly in the areas of child support and rehabilitation services. The Department also provides a central policy and coordination role for the delivery of services across the Human Services Portfolio.

The Human Services Portfolio brings together service delivery agencies – Australian Hearing, Centrelink and Medicare Australia – and the Department of Human Services.

1.5.2 The Child Support Agency

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

The CSA's mission is to support separated parents to transfer payments for the benefit of their children, so they can rely on their parents for the financial and emotional support necessary for their wellbeing.

The CSA provides support and assistance to both parents, including calculating, collecting and transferring child support. The CSA works within the wider Australian Family Law System to provide products, services and referrals to help parents with other aspects of separation.

The role of the CSA is to:

- assess child support payable
- collect payments where requested
- provide information for parents on child support matters
- refer customers to government and other organisations that support separated parents and
- represent the Commonwealth in international child maintenance forums.

As at 1 July 2008, these activities were undertaken in 14 offices around Australia, and 27 Regional Service Centres to support around 1.5 million separated parents and 1.1 million children.

1.5.3 Centrelink

Centrelink is a key service delivery agency in the DHS portfolio and delivers a range of Government assistance programs, including family payments through the Family Assistance Office.

Centrelink's primary role in terms of the Child Support Scheme is ensuring applicants who are eligible for more than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit (FTB) take reasonable action to obtain child support, and adjusting FTB 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 arrangements are the most suitable for their circumstances.

1.5.4 The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) 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 seniors. 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 policy development, analysis and research
- liaison with other agencies in relation to child support
- ensuring appropriate linkages between income support and child support and
- reporting to Government and Parliament.

Additionally, FaHCSIA funds community organisations to deliver early intervention services to couples and families to help them to build stronger family relationships including:

- Family Relationship Centres, which help families work through relationship difficulties, and provide dispute resolution services for separating families needing help to work out parenting arrangements. There are 65 Centres across Australia
- The Family Relationship Advice Line, which provides telephone-based information, referral, advice and dispute resolution to help people affected by family relationship or separation issues. The CSA has been transferring or referring customers to the Family Relationship Centres and Family Relationship Advice Line since the initial 15 Family Relationship Centres and the Family Relationship Advice Line were opened in July 2006.

Family counselling through the Family Relationship Centres and the Family Relationship Advice Line is jointly funded by FaHCSIA and the Attorney Generals Department but is administered by FaHCSIA.

1.5.5 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 and community legal centres.

Legal Aid Commissions are funded to provide legal assistance for Commonwealth law matters, including family law matters. This assistance includes information, advice, duty lawyer services at the courts, and grants for legal representation. From 2007–2008 onwards, an additional \$1.2 million annually has been 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 community legal centres located throughout Australia provide legal assistance to parents eligible to receive child support and parents responsible for paying child support. For services relating to child support issues, these thirteen centres received \$1.48 million in funding for 2008–2009.

Family relationship services funded by the Attorney-General's Department include family dispute resolution, children's contact services, family counselling (jointly with FaHCSIA), services for children experiencing family separation and programs for high conflict families.

1.5.6 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, 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, as part of Stage 2 Scheme reforms, the SSAT was given the authority to review most CSA decisions 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 payments made in lieu of payments due to the CSA 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 SSAT may either substitute a new decision or send the matter back to the 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:

- Self-administration: a private arrangement between parents not involving the CSA, including cases where child support is not sought
- Private collect: the case is registered and assessed by the CSA, but parents make payments directly to each other
- CSA collect: the case is registered and assessed by the CSA, and the CSA collects and transfers payments.

Either parent can register a case with the CSA, either with a court order or a child support agreement, or ask the CSA to do an administrative assessment.

Paying parents, with a CSA collect case, can make payments directly to the 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, in a CSA collect case or in a private collect case at the receiving parent's request, and the CSA is unable to come to a voluntary payment arrangement with the paying parent, legislation gives the CSA powers to recover overdue child support in a number of ways, including:

- automatically deducting child support from wages or income support payments
- automatically deducting money from bank accounts
- working with third parties to pay the money on the paying parent's behalf
- intercepting tax return refunds, and
- stopping a parent from leaving the country with a Departure Prohibition Order (DPO).

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



2.0 Child support cases

2.1 Caseload

Each child support case has two CSA customers:

- the paying parent (the parent who pays child support) and
- the receiving parent (the parent or non-parent carer who receives child support).

There are fewer paying parents and receiving parents than active⁴ cases as some parents are involved in more than one case. As a result, the CSA had 1,520,277 paying parents and receiving parents with 827,761 child support cases at June 2009. The majority of these cases have child support determined through administrative assessment of child support liabilities, with the remainder being either international cases or court-ordered child support cases. The latter represent a small and declining proportion of the caseload.

2.2 Caseload by status and collection method

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 compare 'total caseload' and 'active caseload' growth, as well as the net monthly increase in each of these caseload measures. Active caseload includes all cases that have a current child support liability, as well as those cases where initial registration of the case has not been finalised. Total caseload includes all active cases as well as those cases where there is no current liability but child support is still owed (ended with arrears or EWARs).

Table 2.1: Total caseload¹ by collection status and net monthly increase

Total caseload		
30 June	Number	Net av. monthly increase ²
2002	689,343	N/A
2003	711,541	1,850
2004	745,517	2,831
2005	768,537	1,918
2006	781,026	1,041
2007	797,978	1,413
2008	804,149	514
2009	827,761	1,968

Source: The Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Note:

1. Total caseload figures include cases that have no current liability but debt is still being collected.
2. Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

⁴ Active cases include 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.

Key fact: *There was a net monthly increase of 1,968 cases in the total caseload measure between 30 June 2008 and 30 June 2009.*

Table 2.2: Active caseload growth¹

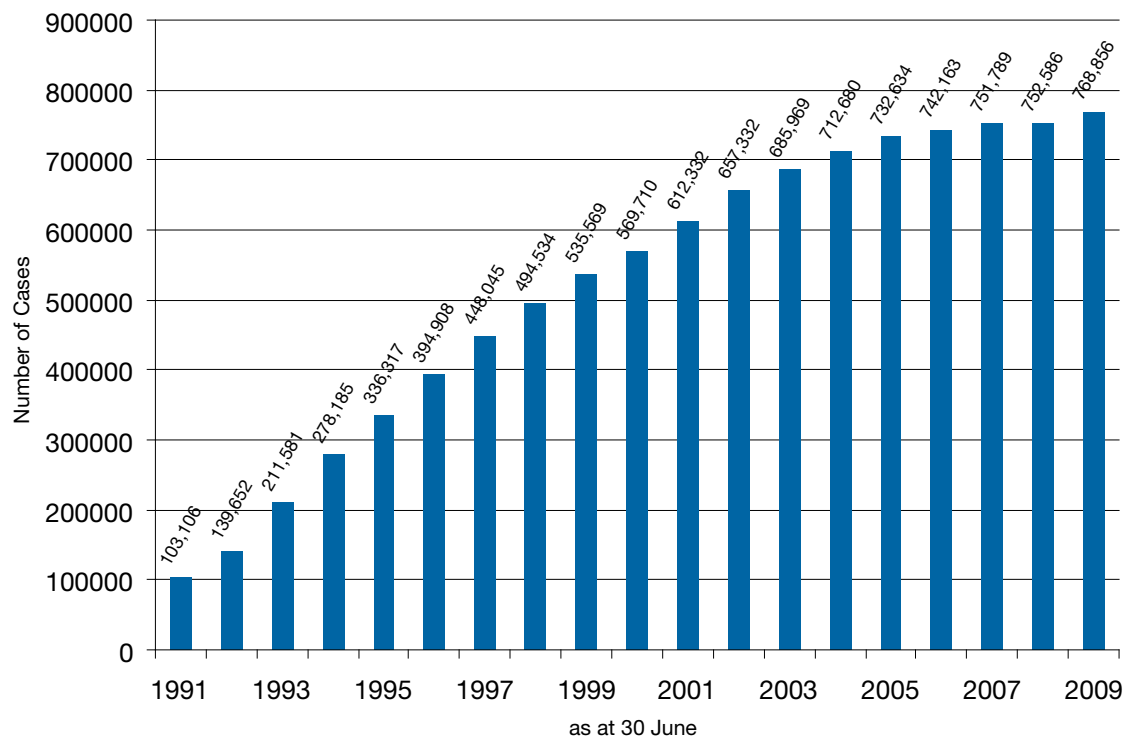
30 June	Active caseload growth	
	Total	Net av. monthly increase
1991	103,106	n/a
1992	139,652	3,046
1993	211,581	5,994
1994	278,185	5,550
1995	336,317	4,844
1996	394,908	4,883
1997	448,045	4,428
1998	494,534	3,874
1999	535,569	3,420
2000	569,710	2,845
2001	612,332	3,552
2002	657,332	3,750
2003	685,969	2,386
2004	712,680	2,226
2005	732,634	1,663
2006	742,163	794
2007	751,789	802
2008	752,586	66
2009	768,856	1,356

Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Note: Active caseload figures in this table include 'processing not finalised', 'total assessed, registered and collecting' and 'total assessed but not collecting'.

Table 2.2 records the monthly net rate of increase in active cases i.e. total new cases less the cases that have ended during the same period. The table shows that the net increase in active cases in 2008-09 was the highest in four years.

Chart 2.1: Active caseload 1991-2009



Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Key fact: In 2008-09 there was a net average monthly increase of 1,356 new cases per month.

Table 2.3: Total caseload by collection method ^{1, 2}

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
2008	410,969	51.1	393,180	48.9	804,149
2009	414,972	50.1	412,789	49.9	827,761

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.
2. Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: *CSA collect and private collect cases, as a percentage of total caseload, has remained relatively steady since 2002.*

On an 'all cases' basis, private collect cases increased to 49.9 per cent by the end of June 2009 (see table 2.3). On an 'active cases' measure, however, private collect cases represented 53.2 per cent of the active caseload at the end of June 2009 (see table 2.4 and charts 2.2 and 2.3 below). 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.

Table 2.4: Active caseload by collection method ^{1,2}

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
2008	358,448	47.9	389,885	52.1	748,333
2009	358,146	46.8	406,771	53.2	764,917

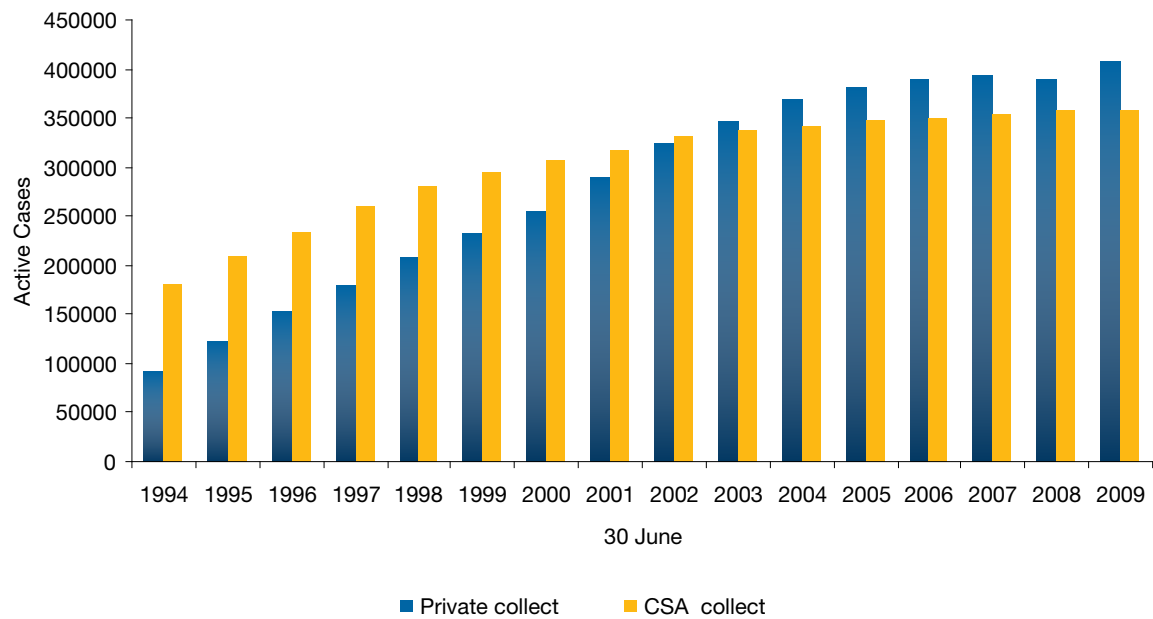
Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. The active caseload numbers in this table exclude cases where processing has not been finalised and therefore does not agree with caseload figures elsewhere in this publication.
2. Percentages may not add due to rounding.

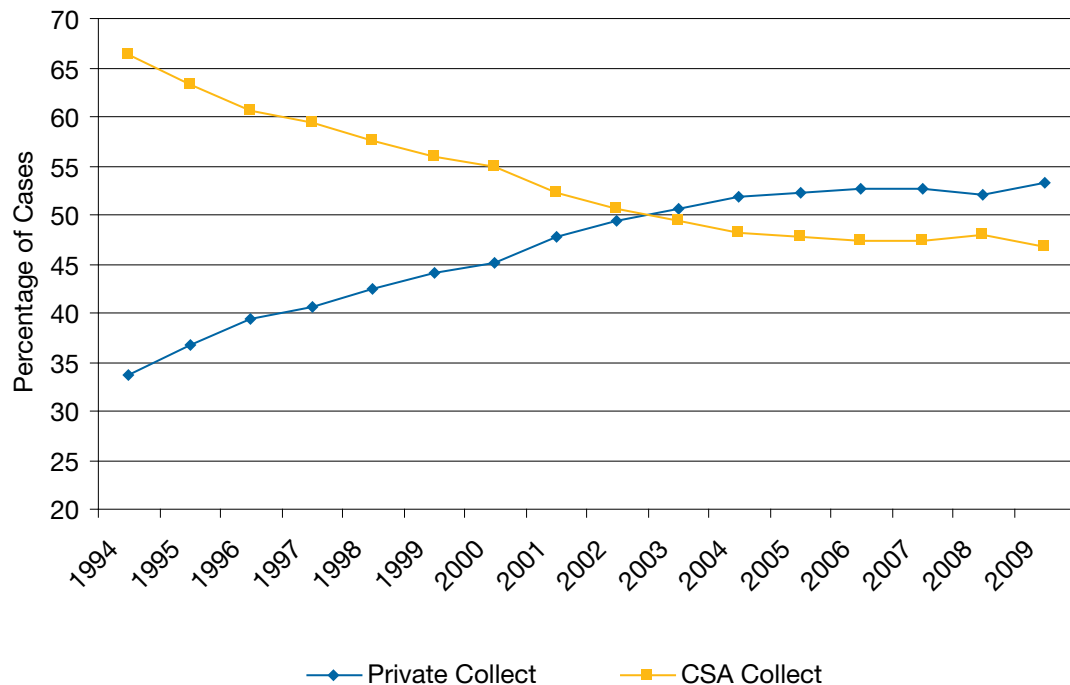
Key fact: *53.2 per cent of parents in active cases have agreed to pay their child support privately.*

Chart 2.2: CSA caseload - private collect and CSA collect



Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Chart 2.3: Private collect and CSA collect ratios



Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Key fact: Since the beginning of the Child Support Scheme there has been a reversal in the private collect to CSA collect ratios. This demonstrates the CSA's focus to encourage parents to create a business like partnership with the other parent.

2.3 International cases

In some instances the CSA is able to administer child support where one parent lives overseas and the other parent lives in Australia.

This is done through existing child support arrangements with overseas countries. These are referred to as reciprocating jurisdictions. Some countries can only recognise court orders for child support. These are known as excluded jurisdictions.

Table 2.5: International caseload as a percentage of active caseload, June 2009

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
2008	29,577	3.9	752,586
2009	29,799	3.9	768,856

Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Key fact: *International cases have grown from 0.4 per cent in 1997 to almost 4 per cent in the last two years.*

Table 2.5 records the growth in international cases in the Australian Child Support Scheme. This steady increase over the past nine years is due to a number of legislative and regulatory amendments that came into force on 1 July 2000 that significantly changed Australia's international obligations for child and spousal maintenance. These legislative amendments, and agreements in overseas child support jurisdictions, have transferred the responsibility for the enforcement of a larger number of international child support matters to the CSA using Australia's administrative processes.

2.4 Assessment type

There are four ways a child support liability can be determined in administratively assessed cases:

- Child support assessment: The CSA makes an assessment for child support based on a legislative formula
- Court order: The court will order how child support is to be determined (by amending the formula or otherwise)
- Departure from administrative assessment in special circumstances (Change of Assessment) and
- Agreement: Both parents agree how their child should be supported financially.

Table 2.6: Total caseload by assessment type and collection method, June 2009 ¹⁻⁵

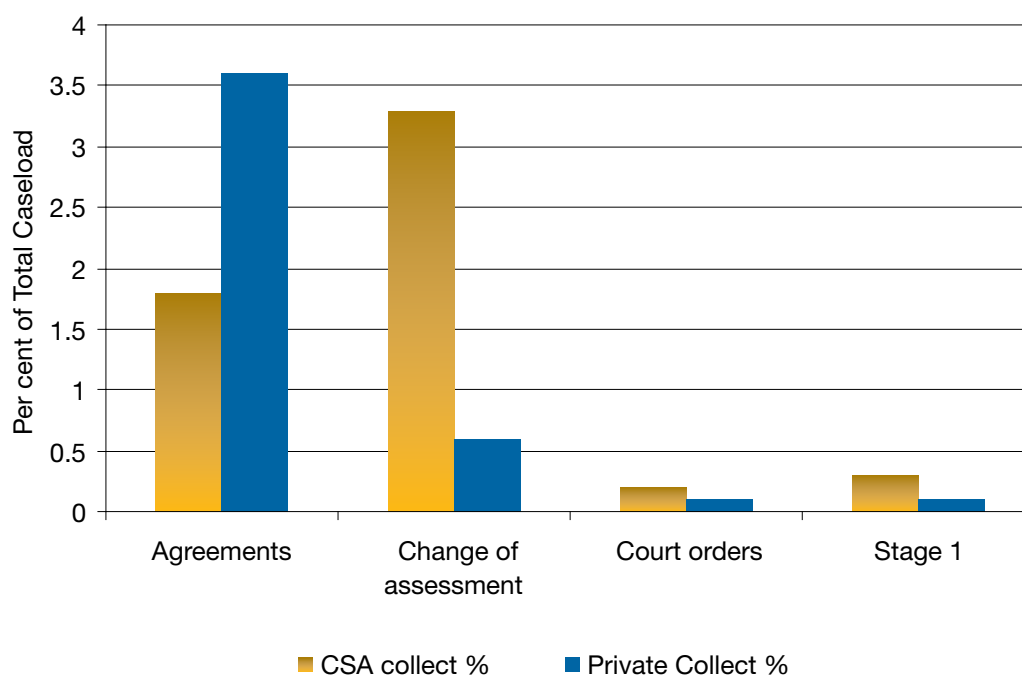
Assessment type	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Formula	335,190	80.8	387,825	94.0	723,015	87.3
Agreements	7,465	1.8	14,875	3.6	22,340	2.7
Change of Assessment	13,520	3.3	2,638	0.6	16,158	2.0
Court orders	635	0.2	345	0.1	980	0.1
Pre-1989 court-ordered cases	1,260	13.7	407	1.6	1,667	7.7
Ended with arrears	56,902	0.3	6,699	0.1	63,601	0.2
Total	414,972	100.0	412,789	100.0	827,761	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. The total number of cases with a Change of Assessment (CoA) differs from the total number of assessments varied because of a Change of Assessment (CoA) application as reported in table 2.7: Change of Assessment—Applications finalised during the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009. This difference is because table 2.7 reports total assessments varied by CoA in the financial year 2008-09 whereas this table reports all current assessments that are varied by CoA applications.
2. Percentages may not add due to rounding.
3. Private collect cases may end with arrears if the receiving parent has opted to collect an ongoing liability privately but leave responsibility for collecting an already outstanding amount with the CSA.
4. Total caseload includes all active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.
5. Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Chart 2.4: Assessment type (excluding formula assessment), June 2009



Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Table 2.6 and chart 2.4 show 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 (3.6 per cent) than are CSA collect arrangements (1.8 per cent). CSA collect cases are significantly more likely to have a liability that is based on a Change of Assessment from the formula than private collect cases (3.3 per cent compared to 0.6 per cent).

2.5 Change of Assessment (CoA)

In 1992 legislation was introduced to allow parents with formula assessments only to apply to the CSA for a departure from a formula assessment of child support⁵. Prior to that, an application had to be made to the Court. Since 1992 there have been more than 230,000 CoA applications.

To apply for a change to a child support assessment, a parent's circumstances must fall within one of ten reasons to seek a change, these are:

1. The costs of maintaining a child are significantly affected by high costs of enabling a parent to spend time with, or communicate with, the child.
2. The costs of maintaining a child are significantly affected by high costs associated with the child's special needs.
3. The costs of maintaining a child are significantly affected by high costs of caring for, educating or training the child in the way both parents intended.
4. The child support assessment is unfair because of the child's income, earning capacity, property or financial resources.
5. The child support assessment is unfair because the paying parent has paid or transferred money, goods or property to the child, the receiving parent, or a third party for the benefit of the child.
6. The costs of maintaining a child are significantly affected by the parent or non-parent carer's high child care costs for the child (and the child is under 12 years).
7. The parent's necessary expenses significantly affect their capacity to support the child.
8. The child support assessment is unfair because of the income, earning capacity, property or financial resources of one or both parents.
9. The parent's capacity to support the child is significantly affected by:
 - their legal duty to maintain another child or person
 - their necessary expenses in supporting another child or person they have a legal duty to maintain
 - their high costs of enabling them to spend time with or communicate with, another child or person they have a legal duty to maintain.
10. The parent's responsibility to maintain a dependent child significantly reduces their capacity to support the child support child.

5. 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 the 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.

Table 2.7: Change of Assessment applications during the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 ^{1, 2}

	Paying parent initiated		Receiving parent initiated		Registrar initiated		Total	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Applications accepted								
Assessment varied	4,651	33.7	7,899	57.2	1,265	9.2	13,815	61.4
Assessment not varied	2,045	55.2	1,589	42.9	74	2.0	3,708	16.5
Refused to make decision 1	296	82.9	60	16.8	1	0.3	357	1.6
Customer agreement	5	10.0	16	32.0	29	58.0	50	0.2
Subtotal	6,997	39.0	9,564	53.3	1,369	7.6	17,930	79.7
Applications not accepted								
Withdrawn	1,803	56.2	1,355	42.2	51	1.6	3,209	14.3
Incomplete	643	64.2	356	35.6	2	0.2	1001	4.5
Ineligible	217	61.3	132	37.3	5	1.4	354	1.6
Subtotal	2,663	58.3	1,843	40.4	58	1.3	4,564	20.3
Applications finalised	9,660	42.9	11,407	50.7	1,427	6.3	22,494	100.0

Source: Change of Assessment (CoA) Team, CSA, June 2009.

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*.
2. Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: 61.4 per cent of applications for a Change of Assessment resulted in a variation during 2008-09.

In 2008-09, 17,930 applications to change a child support assessment were accepted. This is more than 79 per cent of the 22,494 that were submitted. Some 53 per cent of the successful applications were initiated by receiving parents, 39 per cent by paying parents and almost 8 per cent were registrar initiated. In 357 cases the CSA refused to make a decision where the case was too complex.

Table 2.8: All Change of Assessment applications by state and by reason¹

Reason	NSW/ ACT	Qld	Vic/ Tas	SA/NT	WA	Inter- national	Total by reason
High contact costs	814	1,062	556	379	390	360	3,561
Children special needs	1,917	1,441	1,368	628	508	181	6,043
Children education/training	2,960	2,568	2,046	1,102	1,018	268	9,962
Children income/property	1,092	1,126	819	383	594	140	4,154
Goods/money/property	414	547	309	202	251	117	1,840
High childcare costs	726	511	377	251	214	86	2,165
Necessary expenses	1,381	1,809	1,030	778	540	316	5,854
Legal duty	606	890	587	467	299	166	3,015
Extra income	85	195	264	99	80	19	742
Income, property or resources of parents	9,247	7,806	5,859	390	3,753	638	27,693
Earning capacity	5,099	6,050	4,075	3,981	2,479	506	22,190
Resident child	203	256	188	108	115	47	917
High cost time	17	12	14	6	16	15	80
Other	1,229	242	1,362	73	356	239	3,501
CoA reason code	25,790	24,515	18,854	8,847	10,613	3,098	91,717

Source: Change of Assessment (CoA) Team, CSA, June 2009.

Note: There are more applications listed in table 2.8 than in table 2.7 as parents may make an application for more than one reason.

Key fact: *The main reason accepted for Change of Assessment was income, property or resources of parents.*

Table 2.8 shows that in 2008-09 the three main reasons for a Change of Assessment application were:

- The child support assessment is unfair because of the income, earning capacity, property or financial resources of one or both parents (30.2 per cent)
- A change in one or both parents earning capacity (24.2 per cent)
- The parent's expenses associated with the education or training of their children (10.9 per cent).

2.6 Type of care arrangement – previous Scheme and current Scheme comparisons

The amount of child support payable is also related to the number of nights the child or children spend with each parent in the first 12 months of the child support period. If the child or children spend time with both parents, the formula is modified to reflect this. How much time the child spends with each parent decides under which 'type of care' category a parent falls.

Table 2.9: Administrative assessment caseload by care code^{1, 2}, June 2009
(if under previous Scheme)

Care code % of nights	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Less than 30	668	0.2	1,226	0.3	1,894	0.2
Substantial 30.0-39.9	1,685	0.5	5,746	1.4	7,431	1.0
Shared 40.0-59.9	15,009	4.2	49,166	12.1	64,175	8.4
Major 60.0-69.9	9,674	2.7	15,919	3.9	25,593	3.4
Sole 70.0 and over	329,774	92.4	333,626	82.2	663,400	87.0
Total	356,810	100.0	405,683	100.0	762,493	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

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

Table 2.9 illustrates what the care figures would have been under the previous Child Support Scheme had there been no change in care levels after 30 June 2008. Table 2.9 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 are substantially higher than that of the CSA collect cases. New care definitions came into effect on 1 July 2008. These are detailed in the Tables 2.10 and 2.11 below.

Table 2.10: New care categories from 1 July 2008

Number of nights	Percentage of care	Level of care	Cost percentage
0 - 51	0 to less than 14%	Less than regular care	0%
52 - 127	14% to less than 35%	Regular care	24%
128 - 175	35% to less than 48%	Shared care	25% plus 2% for each percentage point over 35%
176 - 189	48% - 52%	Shared care	50%
190 - 237	More than 52% to 65%	Shared care	51% plus 2% for each percentage point over 53%
238 - 313	More than 65% to 86%	Primary care	76%
314 - 365	More than 86% to 100%	Above primary care	100%

Table 2.11: Care percentages based on current Scheme care categories

Family Type	Care provided by paying parents						Total	
	Less than regular		Regular		Shared Care			
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Kids 0 to 12	322,915	74.0	58,854	13.5	54,500	12.5	436,269	100.0
Kids 13 to 18	194,552	81.6	19,991	8.4	23,955	10.0	238,498	100.0
Kids mixed ages	62,712	71.5	11,174	12.7	13,840	15.8	87,726	100.0
Total	580,179	76.1	90,019	11.8	92,295	12.1	762,493	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

3.0 Child support customers

3.1 Number of customers

As at June 2009 there were 827,761 cases (active cases and cases ended with arrears) that were 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 3.1 and 3.2 below.

An increasing number and percentage of paying parents have more than one case – this has been steadily increasing in recent years with the percentage of paying parents with one case declining from 94.8 per cent in 2006-07 to 92.0 per cent in 2008-09.

Table 3.1: Paying parents by number of cases and collection method, June 2009 ^{1, 2}

Number of cases	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
1	326,868	90.2	372,747	93.7	699,615	92.0
2	31,861	8.8	22,979	5.8	54,840	7.2
3	3,374	0.9	1,925	0.5	5,299	0.7
4	341	0.1	192	0.0	533	0.1
5+	64	0.0	21	0.0	85	0.0
Total	362,508	100.0	397,864	100.0	760,372	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. Percentages may not add due to rounding.
2. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Table 3.2: Receiving parents by number of cases and collection method, June 2009

Number of cases	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
1	333,450	90.8	363,681	92.6	697,131	91.7
2	30,840	8.4	27,213	6.9	58,053	7.6
3	2,701	0.7	1,684	0.4	4,385	0.6
4+	235	0.1	101	0.0	336	0.0
Total	367,226	100.0	392,679	100.0	759,905	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Note:

1. Percentages may not add due to rounding.
2. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Key fact: *Eight per cent of both paying and receiving parents have more than one case.*

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 show that around 92 per cent of paying parents and receiving parents are involved in just one case. About eight per cent of paying parents and receiving parents are involved in two cases, while less than one per cent of all paying parents and receiving parents are involved in three or more cases.

When compared to paying parents, there is less change in the percentage of receiving parents with one case. Between 2005-06 and 2008-09 there has been just a 0.5 per cent decline in the number of paying parents with one case. Both private and CSA collect arrangements have seen a small decline in the number of receiving parents with one case.

3.2 Number of children

3.2.1 Children subject to child support formula assessments

There were 1,153,151 children involved in formula assessed cases registered with the CSA as at 30 June 2009. Children who are eligible to be included in an administrative assessment are:

- children who were born on or after 1 October 1989 or
- children whose parents separated on or after 1 October 1989 or
- 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, either an Australian citizen or resident or present in Australia on the day of the application.

Since 1 October 2007, all children under 18 years of age have been eligible for administrative assessment unless excluded by one of the few exceptions above. Child support may continue for children beyond their eighteenth birthday in limited circumstances.

Table 3.3: Eligible children per case—administrative assessment cases only, June 2009^{1, 2}

No. of eligible children	CSA collect			Private collect			Total		
	Cases	Children	% of cases	Cases	Children	% of cases	Cases	Children	% of cases
1	235,428	235,428	66.1	232,094	232,094	57.3	467,522	467,522	61.4
2	91,472	182,944	25.7	126,910	253,820	31.3	218,382	436,764	28.7
3	22,694	68,082	6.4	35,319	105,957	8.7	58,013	174,039	7.6
4	5,111	20,444	1.4	8,170	32,680	2.0	13,281	53,124	1.7
5	1,119	5,595	0.3	1,797	8,985	0.4	2,916	14,580	0.4
6	335	2,010	0.1	485	2,910	0.1	820	4,920	0.1
7	82	574	0.0	123	861	0.0	205	1,435	0.0
8+	38	320	0.0	53	447	0.0	91	767	0.0
Total	356,279	515,397	100.0	404,951	637,754	100.0	761,230	1,153,151	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Note:

1. Percentages may not add due to rounding.
2. This table is based on active caseload only, excluding court assessed cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Key fact: *The CSA assist parents to support more than 1.15 million children.*

Table 3.3 shows the number of children covered by child support assessments by CSA collect and private collect groups. Approximately 66 per cent of CSA collect cases have one eligible child, while over 57 per cent of 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.

The number of eligible children has increased by over 28,000 on the previous year's total, due largely to the increase in the active caseload (23,612 cases).

Table 3.4: Eligible children per active case—administratively assessed cases only, June 2009 ^{1, 2}

No. of eligible children	Domestic			International			Total		
	Cases	Children	% of cases	Cases	Children	% of cases	Cases	Children	% of cases
1	447,790	447,790	61.1	19,732	19,732	69.0	467,522	467,522	61.4
2	211,655	423,310	28.9	6,727	13,454	23.5	218,382	436,764	28.7
3	56,399	169,197	7.7	1,614	4,842	5.6	58,013	174,039	7.6
4	12,913	51,652	1.8	368	1,472	1.3	13,281	53,124	1.7
5	2,814	14,070	0.4	102	510	0.4	2,916	14,580	0.4
6	783	4,698	0.1	37	222	0.1	820	4,920	0.1
7	200	1,400	0.0	5	35	0.0	205	1,435	0.0
8+	88	739	0.0	3	28	0.0	91	767	0.0
Total	732,642	1,112,856	100.0	28,588	40,295	100.0	761,230	1,153,151	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Note:

1. Percentages may not add due to rounding.
2. This table is based on active caseload only, excluding court assessed cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Key fact: *More than 69 per cent of international cases have only one eligible child while only 61 per cent of domestic cases have one eligible child.*

Table 3.4 shows a comparison between international and domestic cases. International cases are 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 (1.41) per case.

3.2.2 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. The paying parent must have at least shared care of the child (35 per cent or more care).

Table 3.5: Relevant dependent children per case by collection method—administrative assessed cases only, June 2009 ¹⁻³

Number of children	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
1	27,925	6.8	15,719	3.8	43,644	5.3
2	15,762	3.9	6,763	1.6	22,525	2.8
3	4,478	1.1	1,429	0.3	5,907	0.7
4	1,091	0.3	272	0.1	1,363	0.2
5+	278	0.1	63	0.0	341	0.0
Total cases with relevant dependent children	49,534	12.1	24,246	5.9	73,780	9.0
Total administratively assessed cases	408,026	100.0	410,922	100.0	818,948	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. Percentages may not add due to rounding.
2. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.
3. Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Key fact: *Around 12 per cent of CSA collect cases have relevant dependent children.*

The impact of the presence of relevant dependent children is to increase the paying parent's exempt income amount. Nine per cent of all administratively assessed cases are adjusted for relevant children, as shown in table 3.5.

The number and percentages of cases with relevant dependent children continued to rise during 2008-09. Private collect cases with relevant dependent children increased from 5.7 per cent to 5.9 per cent of all private collect cases during the year. There was a less pronounced increase in the CSA collect category.

3.3 Number and gender of paying and receiving parents

Traditionally, paying parents are seen to be male and receiving parents are seen to be female. However, the number of females in paying parent roles has been increasing in recent years and is expected to continue to climb.

Table 3.6: Paying parent gender by collection method, June 2009 (all cases) ¹⁻³

	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Male	371,803	89.6	352,849	85.5	724,652	87.5
Female	43,169	10.4	59,940	14.5	103,109	12.5
Total	414,972	100.0	412,789	100.0	827,761	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. Percentages may not add due to rounding and due to the exclusion of cases where paying parent gender could not be determined from CSA.
2. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.
3. Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Key fact: *More than 12 percent of paying parents are female.*

Table 3.6 shows that, on a total caseload basis, 89.6 per cent of the CSA collect paying parents are male and 10.4 per cent are female. A higher percentage of private collect paying parents are female (14.5 per cent). The percentage of males in the paying parent roles continued a declining trend, dropping from 87.8 per cent in 2006-07 to 87.5 per cent by the end of 2008-09.

Table 3.7: Paying parent gender by collection method for cases registered in 2009 ^{1, 2}

	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Male	7,829	77.0	19,860	76.6	27,689	76.7
Female	2,332	23.0	6,063	23.4	8,395	23.3
Total	10,161	100.0	25,923	100.0	36,084	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. Percentages may not add due to rounding and due to the exclusion of cases where paying parent gender could not be determined from CSA data.
2. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Key fact: *23.3 per cent of paying parents in cases registered in 2009 were female.*

Table 3.7 shows that for the 36,084 cases first registered in the first six months from 1 January 2009 until 30 June 2009 the percentage of female paying parents was 23.3 per cent while male paying parents accounted for 76.7 per cent.

Table 3.8: Receiving parent gender by collection method, June 2009 (all cases) ¹⁻³

	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Male	41,684	10.0	58,995	14.3	100,679	12.2
Female	373,288	90.0	353,794	85.7	727,082	87.8
Total	414,972	100.0	412,789	100.0	827,761	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. Percentages may not add due to rounding and due to the exclusion of cases where paying parent gender could not be determined from CSA data.
2. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Key fact: *In about 88 per cent of cases the receiving parent is female and in 12 per cent they are male.*

Table 3.8 shows that, on a total caseload basis, 10.0 per cent of CSA collect receiving parents are male and 90.0 per cent of CSA collect receiving parents are female. Furthermore, 14.3 per cent of private collect receiving parents are male and 85.7 per cent are female.

Table 3.9: Receiving parent gender by collection method for cases registered in 2009 ^{1, 2}

	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Male	2,156	21.2	5,899	22.8	8,055	22.3
Female	8,005	78.8	20,024	77.2	28,029	77.7
Total	10,161	100.0	25,923	100.0	36,084	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. Percentages may not add due to rounding and due to the exclusion of cases where paying parent gender could not be determined from CSA data.
2. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Table 3.9 shows that for the 36,084 cases first registered in the first six months from 1 January 2009 until 30 June 2009, more than 22 per cent of receiving parents were male and almost 78 per cent were female.

3.4 Age of cases

Age data is related to the year that a case was first registered with the CSA. A number of the cases will have ended, as the child would have turned 18, but are still included as child support is owed.

Table 3.10: Age of cases by domestic and international status, June 2009 (all cases) ¹⁻⁴

Case age in years	Start date of case	Domestic		International		Total	
		Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
21	1988	1,107	0.1	92	0.2	1,199	0.1
20	1989	2,255	0.3	215	0.5	2,470	0.3
19	1990	6,047	0.8	342	0.9	6,389	0.8
18	1991	8,334	1.1	410	1.0	8,744	1.1
17	1992	15,453	2.0	537	1.4	15,990	1.9
16	1993	28,258	3.6	815	2.0	29,073	3.5
15	1994	30,283	3.8	845	2.1	31,128	3.8
14	1995	32,931	4.2	845	2.1	33,776	4.1
13	1996	36,919	4.7	980	2.5	37,899	4.6
12	1997	41,520	5.3	1,115	2.8	42,635	5.2
11	1998	38,974	4.9	1,028	2.6	40,002	4.8
10	1999	42,701	5.4	1,133	2.8	43,834	5.3
9	2000	51,148	6.5	1,946	4.9	53,094	6.4
8	2001	55,007	7.0	3,042	7.6	58,049	7.0
7	2002	49,580	6.3	2,840	7.1	52,420	6.3
6	2003	46,924	6.0	2,258	5.7	49,182	5.9
5	2004	47,676	6.1	3,045	7.7	50,721	6.1
4	2005	47,685	6.1	2,593	6.5	50,278	6.1
3	2006	50,288	6.4	3,807	9.6	54,095	6.5
2	2007	54,734	6.9	4,332	10.9	59,066	7.1
1	2008	66,021	8.4	5,093	12.8	71,114	8.6
0	2009	33,634	4.3	2,450	6.2	36,084	4.4
Total		787,993	100.0	39,768	100.0	827,761	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. Data relates to the year the case was first registered.
2. The 2009 data (i.e. those cases in the "0" age row) is for the half year to 30 June.
3. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Table 3.10 divides the caseload into age of cases by domestic and international cases. Over 46 per cent of international cases have been registered in the last five years, compared with 32.1 per cent for domestic cases.

3.5 Location of paying and receiving parents

This section reports on the location of all active cases and cases that have ended with arrears. The Australian Child Support Agency (CSA) may be able to administer child support cases where one parent lives overseas and the other parent lives in Australia.

Table 3.11: Location of parents, children and cases, June 2009

	Paying parents	Receiving parents	Cases ¹	Total children ¹
Australia ²	612,360	647,723	708,511	1,003,772
International ³	36,391	40,361	43,713	45,182
Postcode not set ⁴	106,525	68,722	72,192	100,030
Unused postcode ⁵	5,096	3,099	3,345	4,648
Total⁶	760,372	759,905	827,761	1,153,632

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

- Each child support 'case' involves:
 - a parent who is liable to make child support payments towards the cost of one or more children (termed a paying parent), and
 - a person entitled to receive child support (termed a receiving parent), and
 - one or more children for whom child support is payable. The children total includes eligible children as well as those covered by court orders and therefore varies slightly from children totals recorded elsewhere in this publication.
- These customer totals relate to all paying and receiving parents that could be distributed into the electorates above.
- Some customers are associated with 'international cases' and therefore do not have an Australian postcode.
- There are 175,247 parents for whom a postcode was unavailable. Most were on tracing at the end of June 2009.
- 'Unused postcode' refers to those customers whose postcode does not appear in the algorithm used by the CSA to allocate customers into electorates. Postcodes are excluded where that postcode has been created since the algorithm was constructed.
- These are the total number of customers (paying parents and receiving parents) of the CSA as at 30 June 2009, allocated to a late 2007 electorate distribution.

Key fact: In 2008-09 there were 45,182 eligible children living overseas.

Table 3.11 shows that there are more than 600,000 paying and receiving parents that live in Australia and more than 36,000 paying and 40,000 receiving parents that reside overseas.

There are more than 1.1 million children that are being supported by child support payments, 1,003,772 of them are located in Australia.

There are a small proportion of customers that CSA is unable to locate as they have not provided a postcode, or have provided an incorrect one.

Table 3.12: Number of cases by the location of the paying parents, June 2009 ¹⁻³

State that paying parent lives	Number of cases	(%)
ACT	12,879	1.6
NSW	237,511	28.7
NT	8,461	1.0
Qld	188,169	22.7
SA	71,498	8.6
Tas	21,442	2.6
Vic	178,888	21.6
WA	68,832	8.3
International	39,768	4.8
Total	827,761	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

- As parents can have more than one case, there will be more cases than parents.
- This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Table 3.12 shows that in 2008-09, 28.7 per cent of paying parents lived in New South Wales and 21.6 per cent lived in Victoria, which is in proportion to the population of these states.

Table 3.13: Number of cases by the location of the receiving parents, June 2009¹⁻³

State that paying parent lives	Number of cases	(%)
ACT	6,686	0.8
NSW	236,837	28.6
NT	7,666	0.9
Qld	186,316	22.5
SA	69,529	8.4
Tas	23,375	2.8
Vic	178,395	21.6
WA	70,607	8.5
International	43,713	5.3
Unknown	4,637	0.6
Total	827,761	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. As parents can have more than one case there will be more cases than parents.
2. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Key fact: 28.7 per cent of paying parents and 28.6 per cent of receiving parents live in NSW.

Table 3.13 shows that similarly to paying parents, the highest proportion of receiving parents live in New South Wales (29.5 per cent) and Victoria (21.5 per cent).

3.6 Income of paying and receiving parents

A broad range of income is taken into account to work out a parent's child support income. Child support income is the adjusted taxable income for a parent minus the self support amount which was \$18,252 in 2008-09. We calculate a parents adjusted taxable income from their taxable income, gross reportable fringe benefits, target foreign income, salary sacrificed superannuation, total net investment losses and some tax free pensions or benefits.

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

Table 3.14: Paying parent child support income, June 2009¹

Paying parents	CSA collect	Private collect	Total cases
Total number	414,972	412,789	827,761
Median	\$20,392	\$36,504	\$31,000
Average	\$27,687	\$42,036	\$34,843

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.
2. These incomes include cases with nil liabilities (customers with zero incomes).

Key fact: *On average private collect paying parents have a child support income that is 52 per cent higher than CSA collect cases.*

Table 3.15: Paying parent taxable income, June 2009^{1, 2}

Paying parents	CSA collect	Private collect	Total no. of paying parent tax returns
Total number	229,102	293,669	522,771
Median	\$38,102	\$42,837	\$40,677
Average	\$43,035	\$50,171	\$47,044

Source: Tax Returns Database (TRDB) and the CSA Customer Research Extract, June 2009.

Notes:

1. There were 304,990 paying parents who did not lodge in the relevant year (185,870 CSA collect and 119,120 private collect).
2. This table is based on total caseload, including active cases and cases that have ended with arrears.

Key fact: *On average private collect paying parents have a taxable income that is 16.6 per cent higher than CSA collect cases.*

Tables 3.14 and 3.15 show paying parent child support and taxable income figures for 2008-09. On average a paying parent's taxable income is 35 per cent higher than their child support income, as child support income takes into account a parent's other income. The median income (both child support and taxable income) of private collect paying parents is higher than that of CSA collect parents.

Table 3.16: Receiving parent child support income, June 2009^{1, 2}

Receiving parents	CSA collect	Private collect	Total cases
Total number	414,972	412,789	827,761
Median	\$14,381	\$19,028	\$16,350
Average	\$20,655	\$24,993	\$22,818

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

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 parents as it does not take into account access to taxable Centrelink benefits for those parents for those parents who have not lodged a tax return.

Table 3.16 shows that child support median and average incomes recorded do not include many of the benefits paid to resident parents by Centrelink. Receiving parent child support income figures reported in this table will understate the total income available to receiving 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 21 per cent higher than parents in CSA collect cases.*

Table 3.17: Receiving parent taxable income, June 2009¹

Receiving parents	CSA collect	Private collect	Total no. of receiving parent tax returns
Total number	250,038	263,622	513,660
Median	\$26,964	\$26,971	\$26,967
Average	\$30,945	\$31,293	\$31,123

Source: Tax Returns Database and the CSA (Customer Research Extract for all active cases and cases ended with arrears), June 2009.

Note: There were 314,101 receiving parents who did not lodge in the relevant year (164,934 CSA collect and 149,167 private collect).

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

Tables 3.14 to 3.17 show that paying parents' median taxable incomes (for those who lodged tax returns) are significantly greater than the median taxable income of receiving parents (for those who lodged tax returns). Family Tax Benefit (FTB) 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.

3.7 Income sources of paying parents who lodged income tax returns

A broad range of income sources are taken into account when working out a parent's child support income. When a parent lodges a tax return, the CSA has a clear indication of their income sources and therefore uses the correct amount for child support income. In 2008-09 522,771 paying parents lodged tax returns.

The CSA works closely with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to improve the rate and timeliness of parents' tax return lodgement. This ensures child support calculations are more accurate and it reduces the number of assessments calculated using default incomes.

Table 3.18: Income sources of paying parents who lodge income tax returns, June 2009 ^{1, 2}

Top 10 income sources	Number	Paying parents deriving income from source (%)	Average earnings (\$)
Salary and wages	459,976	88.0	48,278
Allowance, directors' fees	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gross interest	129,416	24.8	1,051
Govt benefits and allowance	69,755	13.3	4,852
Net income or loss from business	59,876	11.5	17,512
Dividends	49,210	9.4	5,696
Gross rent	38,815	7.4	12,766
Partnerships and trusts	34,157	6.5	19,066
Eligible termination payments	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lump sum payments	7,076	1.4	6,916
Total for CSA paying parents	522,771	100.0	47,044

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. The results in this table are derived from the Tax Return Database (TRDB) of the ATO and only include those CSA paying parents who lodged tax returns for the 2007-08 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.

Key fact: *The majority of all paying parents who lodged a current tax return earned income from salaries and wages.*

Table 3.18 shows the source of income for paying parents who lodged tax returns. 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 88 per cent of all paying parents deriving some or all of their income from this source. By comparison, just over 13 per cent of paying parents who lodged tax returns received some or all of their income from Government benefits and allowances.

The average earnings from salary and wages have increased in 2008-09. For those paying parents who lodged a tax return in 2007-08, the average earnings from salary and wages was \$45,876, in 2008-09 the average was \$48,278. Income from partnerships and trusts (\$23,126 in 2007-08 compared to \$19,066 in 2008-09) has decreased.

Table 3.18 shows the average income for the 63.2 per cent of paying parents who had lodged a tax return for 2006-07 by June 2008. Therefore it is not the same as the average income for all paying parents.

3.8 CSA customers on Centrelink benefits

The majority of separated parents with care of children are entitled to receive some type of Centrelink benefit. Centrelink and the CSA therefore have a large number of mutual customers. A majority of these customers will receive Family Tax Benefit (FTB). 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 the CSA
- privately collecting 100 per cent of the assessed amount or
- lodging a child support agreement that meets 100 per cent of the assessed amount.

Some parents will also meet the reasonable action test by having a court order, or will be exempted due to special circumstances.

Table 3.19: Number of paying parents on a Centrelink benefit, June 2009¹

Centrelink payment	Paying parents		Receiving parents	
	Number	% of total customers	Number	% of total customers
Aged Pension	2,077	0.3	1,472	0.2
Carer Allowance	6,891	0.9	13,842	1.8
Disability Pension	50,236	6.6	32,972	4.3
Newstart Allowance	89,181	11.7	44,580	5.9
Partner Allowance	7,605	1.0	43,801	5.8
Parenting Payment — Single	34,543	4.5	310,491	40.9
Parenting Payment — Partnered	25	0.0	51	0.0
Total receiving Centrelink benefits (excluding FTB)	184,158	24.2	415,851	54.7
Total CSA customers	760,372	100.0	759,905	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Note: Some paying parents may have more than one case and therefore may also be a receiving parent. Additionally, some parents may be in receipt of more than one Centrelink benefit type and therefore the benefit categories add to more than the total number of CSA paying and receiving parents in receipt of Centrelink benefits.

Key fact: 11.7 per cent of paying parents are on a Newstart Allowance.

Table 3.19 above outlines the number and percentage of paying and receiving parents by their Centrelink benefit, as well as the total number of CSA customers on Centrelink benefits. In 2008-09, almost 41 per cent of the CSA's receiving parents received a 'Parenting Payment - Single'.



4.0 Liabilities, payments and transfers

4.1 Liabilities

The following liability statistics are broken down into CSA collect and private collect categories.

4.1.1 Liabilities by CSA collect and private collect

Prior to 1 July 1999, if a paying parent had a liability of less than \$260 per year, they 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 2009 to \$356 per year. The minimum payment is now indexed yearly, in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), allowing the minimum child support payments to 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
- pre-October 1989 court orders can have a clause stating the paying parent will not have to pay child maintenance during periods of unemployment or in some other circumstances
- a pre-October 1989 paying parent can apply to the 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 equal.

Table 4.1: Liability by collection method, June 2009 (all cases) ¹⁻³

Annual paying parent liability (\$)	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
Nil	26,667	6.4	50,331	12.2	76,998	9.3
1 to <339	3,526	0.8	5,453	1.3	8,979	1.1
339	75,944	18.3	38,862	9.4	114,806	13.9
340 to <356	341	0.1	379	0.1	720	0.1
356	20,008	4.8	13,371	3.2	33,379	4.0
Over 356	231,584	55.8	297,694	72.1	529,278	63.9
Ended with arrears	56,902	13.7	6,699	1.6	63,601	7.7
Total	414,972	100.0	412,789	100.0	827,761	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. The \$333 and \$339 vales in this table and subsequent liability tables reflect the minimum liability values that currently apply to the cases of low income paying parents.
2. There has been a drop of just over 1,000 customers who have been assessed at the nil liability level, reversing the trend of previous years.

Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Key fact: 63.9 per cent of paying parents are assessed to pay more than the minimum child support amount.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show the percentage of CSA collect and private collect paying parents within specified liability ranges. Chart 4.1 plots those percentages. The tables and charts demonstrate that:

- a smaller proportion of the CSA collect cases have nil liabilities than private collect cases
- a higher proportion of the CSA collect cases have minimum liabilities than private collect cases
- a higher proportion of the 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.

Table 4.2: Paying parent liability by collection method, June 2009 (all cases)^{1,2}

Annual paying parent liability (\$)	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
0	26,667	6.4	50,331	12.2	76,998	9.3
1-338	3,526	0.8	5,453	1.3	8,979	1.1
339	75,944	18.3	38,862	9.4	114,806	13.9
340-355	341	0.1	379	0.1	720	0.1
356	20,008	4.8	13,371	3.2	33,379	4.0
357-500	3,484	0.8	3,977	1.0	7,461	0.9
501-1,000	13,039	3.1	13,423	3.3	26,462	3.2
1,001-2,000	42,059	10.1	40,651	9.8	82,710	10.0
2,001-3,000	34,774	8.4	37,863	9.2	72,637	8.8
3,001-4,000	33,094	8.0	38,701	9.4	71,795	8.7
4,001-5,000	28,810	6.9	36,036	8.7	64,846	7.8
5,001-6,000	18,980	4.6	25,275	6.1	44,255	5.3
6,001-7,000	12,635	3.0	17,623	4.3	30,258	3.7
7,001-8,000	9,607	2.3	15,038	3.6	24,645	3.0
8,001-9,000	7,600	1.8	12,363	3.0	19,963	2.4
9,001-10,000	5,793	1.4	10,161	2.5	15,954	1.9
10,001-11,000	4,496	1.1	8,472	2.1	12,968	1.6
11,001-12,000	3,624	0.9	6,848	1.7	10,472	1.3
12,001-13,000	2,809	0.7	5,812	1.4	8,621	1.0
13,001-14,000	2,293	0.6	4,664	1.1	6,957	0.8
14,001-15,000	1,731	0.4	3,666	0.9	5,397	0.7
15,001-16,000	1,384	0.3	3,183	0.8	4,567	0.6
16,001-17,000	1,140	0.3	2,584	0.6	3,724	0.4
17,001-18,000	834	0.2	1,928	0.5	2,762	0.3
18,001-19,000	617	0.1	1,516	0.4	2,133	0.3
19,001-20,000	539	0.1	1,350	0.3	1,889	0.2
>20,001	2,242	0.5	6,560	1.6	8,802	1.1
Ended with arrears	56,902	13.7	6,699	1.6	63,601	7.7
Total	414,972	100.0	412,789	100.0	827,761	100.0

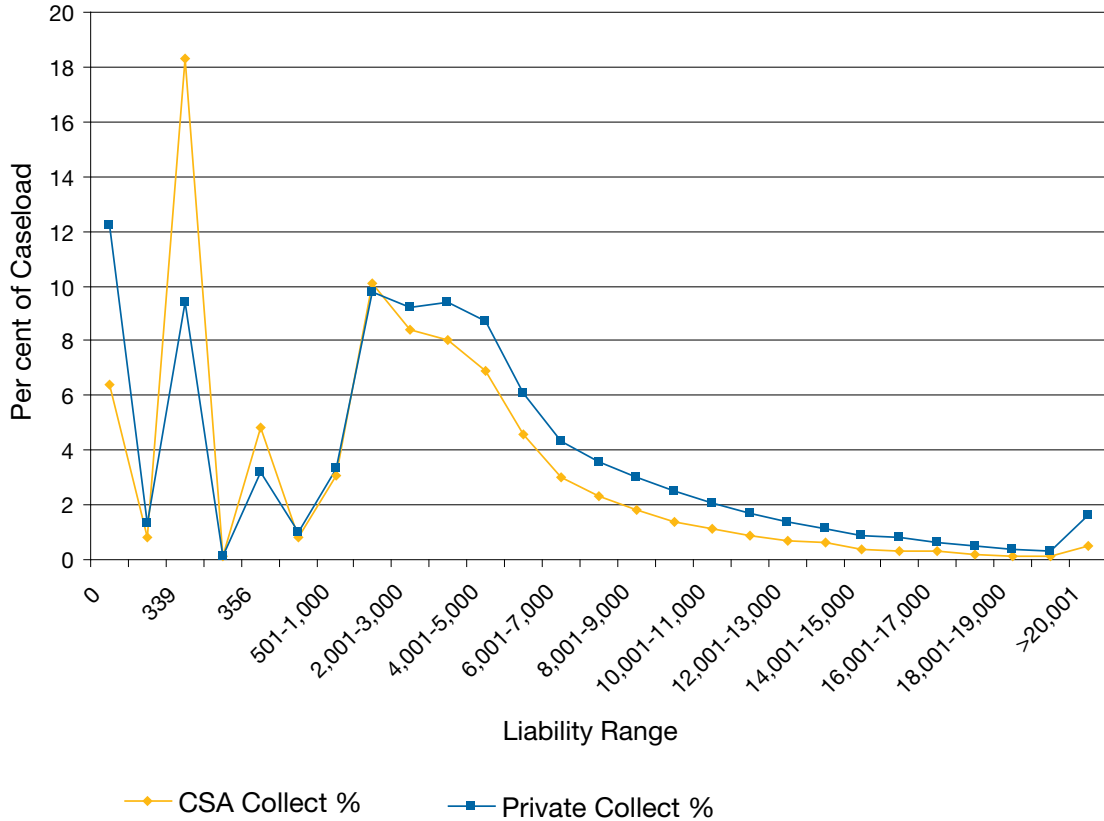
Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. Percentages may not add exactly due to rounding.
2. Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Key fact: 13.9 per cent of paying parents pay \$339 per year (as their child support period began in 2008).

Chart 4.1: Paying parent liability (for active cases) by collection method, June 2009.



Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

4.1.2 Average child support liabilities

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show average child support liabilities on an annual and weekly basis and include the method by which these payments are collected, and whether or not the cases are domestic or international. The average annual liability with cases that have a liability of more than \$356 is \$5,312.89. The average weekly liability with cases that have a liability of more than \$333 is \$102.17.

Table 4.3: Average child support liability by collection method, June 2009 (all active cases)¹

Collection method	Average annual liabilities (all cases)			Average annual liabilities (liability more than \$356)		
	Domestic (\$)	International (\$)	Total (\$)	Domestic (\$)	International (\$)	Total (\$)
CSA collect	3,343.51	3,869.15	3,377.35	4,726.24	4,255.64	4,687.17
Private collect	4,914.78	4,507.82	4,906.78	5,820.06	4,883.94	5,799.88
Total	4,175.14	4,026.79	4,169.02	5,358.72	4,412.79	5,312.89

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

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

Key fact: Most average annual liabilities figures decreased in 2008-09 as a result of scheme reforms.

Table 4.3 records the average annual child support by stage and collection method. There are two sets of averages—one includes all cases and the other excludes cases where the assessment is \$356 a year or less. Where liabilities of \$356 or less have been excluded, there is a difference of \$945.93 between the average domestic liability (\$5,358.72 per year) and the average international liability (\$4,412.79 per year). Where all cases have been included, the difference between the domestic and international average liability figures is \$148.35 per year.

Key fact: *For those cases with an annual liability above the minimum rate, domestic cases have a liability 21.4 per cent higher than international cases.*

Table 4.4: Average weekly liabilities by the number of eligible children by collection method—administrative assessment cases only, June 2009¹

Eligible children	CSA collect		Private collect		Total	
	Number	Average (\$)	Number	Average (\$)	Number	Average (\$)
1	219,728	55.13	202,789	73.71	422,517	64.05
2	83,714	82.92	111,129	117.93	194,843	102.89
3	20,721	89.64	31,340	135.24	52,061	117.09
4	4,697	81.93	7,334	121.20	12,031	105.87
5	1,031	59.63	1,627	98.03	2,658	83.13
6	301	57.19	442	94.97	743	79.67
7	78	57.68	113	79.62	191	70.66
8	23	58.76	33	93.50	56	79.23
More than 8	10	42.07	16	82.07	26	66.68
Total	330,303	64.74	354,823	94.12	685,126	79.95

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

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

Key fact: *Administratively assessed cases with three eligible children have the highest average weekly child support liability.*

Table 4.4 outlines the total average weekly liability for administratively assessed CSA collect and private collect cases based upon the number of eligible children. The average liabilities of private collect cases are higher than the average liabilities for CSA collect cases.

4.2 Payments

The following section looks at both private collect and CSA collect liabilities and collections both internationally and domestically. By comparing liabilities and collections the CSA can determine the degree to which its collection strategies have worked.

4.2.1 Total credits and liabilities

Cumulative liability refers to the total amount assessed by all paying parents. Cumulative crediting rate refers to the total child support that all paying parents have either transferred or discharged. The crediting rate is calculated by finding out what percentage of child support has been credited (cumulative crediting rate) compared to the total assessed (cumulative liability).

Table 4.5: Cumulative liabilities and credits for CSA collect cases, June 2009 ¹⁻³

30 June	Cumulative liabilities (\$m)	Cumulative credits (\$m)	Crediting rate (%)
1988–1991	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
1988–2008	11,988.4	10,974.8	91.5
1988–2009	13,203.3	12,114.7	91.8

Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

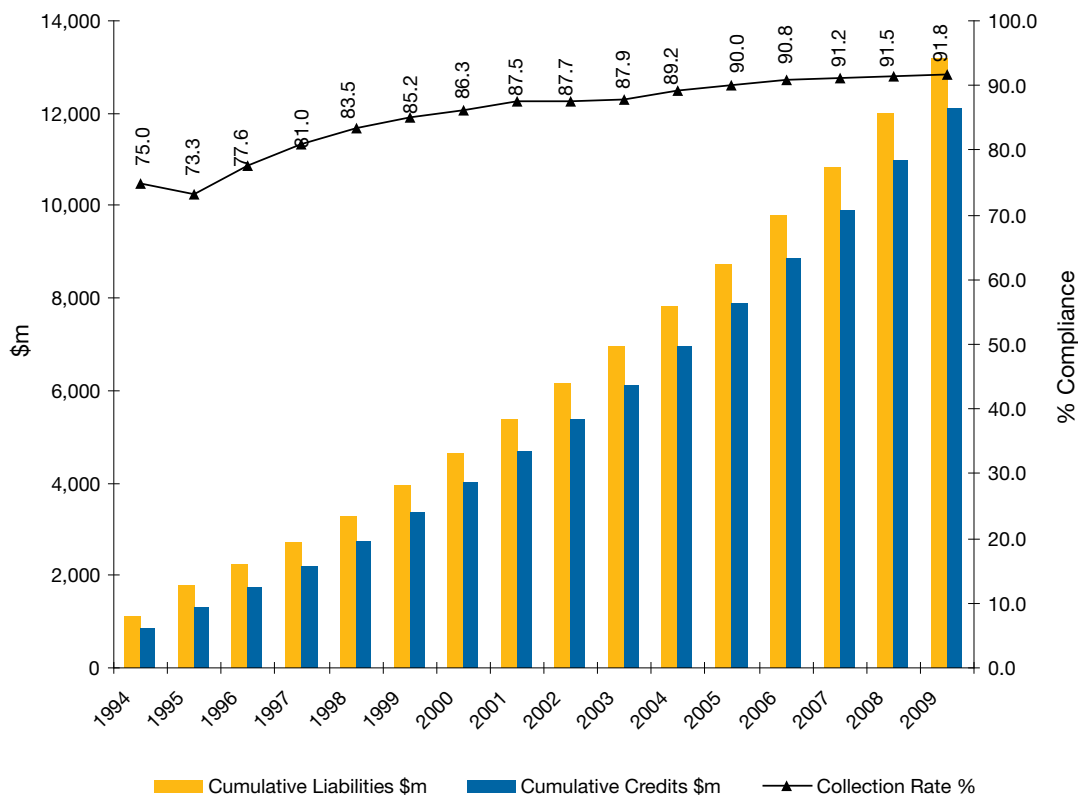
Notes:

1. The difference between the 'all liabilities' figures and the 'all credits' figures are the Total Child Support 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. Crediting rate refers to the percentage of liability that has been credited.

Key fact: *The crediting rate has been increasing steadily since Scheme inception and is currently almost 92 per cent.*

Table 4.5 shows total liabilities and total credits for CSA collect cases since 1988. For the period 30 June 1988 to 30 June 1991 a total of \$283 million in liabilities had been registered for paying parents and \$185 million had been credited. In other words, the CSA credits represented 65 per cent of all liabilities. By June 2009 the CSA collect cumulative liabilities had risen to \$13,203.3 million and cumulative credits were up to \$12,114.7 million. This resulted in a 91.8 per cent crediting rate for CSA collect cases. The cumulative liabilities and credits data in table 4.5 are also depicted in chart 4.2.

Chart 4.2: Cumulative liabilities and credits (CSA collect cases) since 1994



Key fact: Credits are increasing in line with the growth in liabilities.

Chart 4.3: Private collect liabilities since 1994

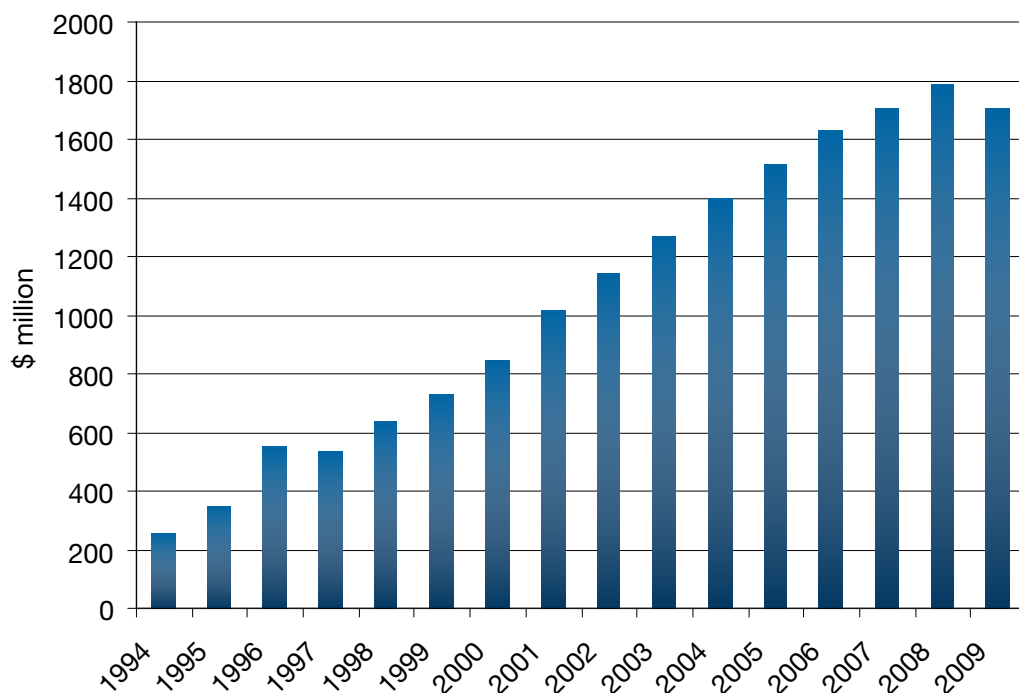


Chart 4.3 shows the total private collect liabilities from 1994 to 2009. As receiving parents are able to request collection by the CSA if the paying parent fails to meet their obligation, it is assumed the collection rate for privately collected child support is 100 per cent.

Key fact: *Private collect liabilities in 2009 have dropped for the first time since 1997.*

4.3 Child support transferred

'Transfers' refer to both child support liabilities that have been collected by the CSA (CSA collect), and where payments have been paid directly between parents but where the case is registered with the CSA (private collect arrangements) ⁶.

Parents have met about 96 per cent of all child support liabilities (private collect and the CSA collect cases combined). This represents over \$29 billion since 1988.

Table 4.6: Child support transferred between parents (\$m)

	CSA collect ¹		Private collect ²		Total
30 June	(\$m)	(%)	(\$m)	(%)	(\$m)
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
2008	1,032	36.6	1,787	63.4	2,819
2009	1,088	39.0	1,702	61.0	2,790

Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

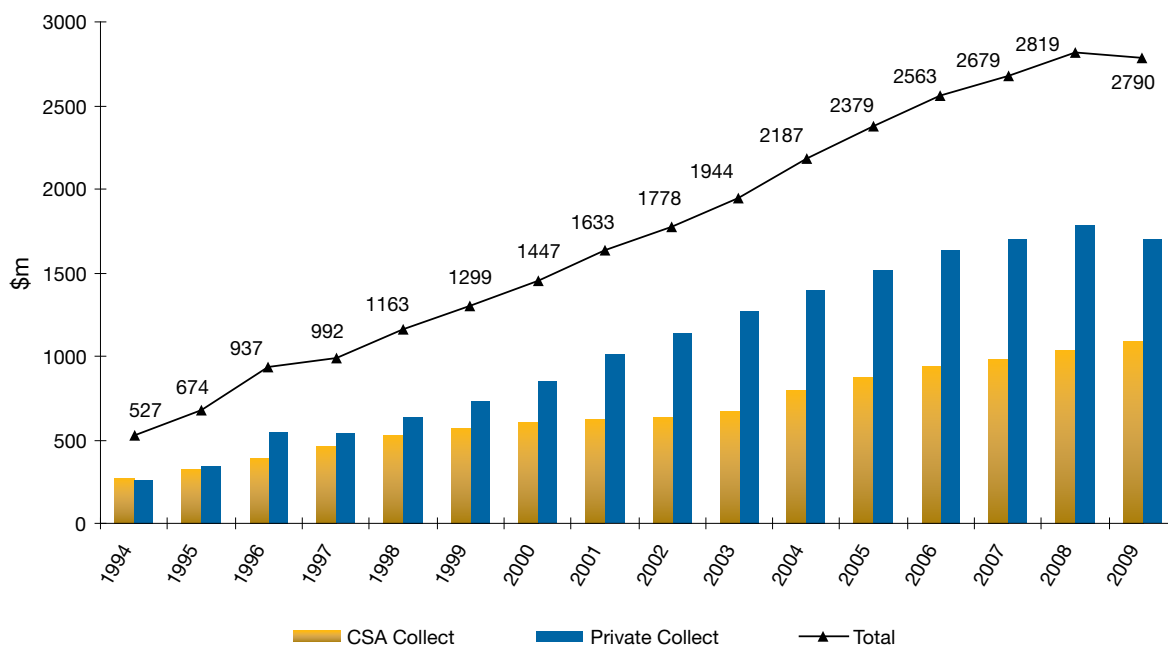
1. The CSA collect figures include amounts for Interim Disbursement, Final Disbursement, Emergency Disbursement and Non-Agency Payments.
2. Private collect totals assume 100 per cent of privately paid child support is transferred. Where this is not so, the receiving parent is entitled to ask the CSA to collect the liability.

Key fact: *Over 96 per cent of all child support liabilities since 1988 have either been collected or discharged, representing more than \$29 billion.*

6. FaHCSIA policy assumes, for the purposes of calculating FTB(A), that all the child support is transferred between private collect parents. Consequently the CSA also makes this assumption. However, it is acknowledged 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.

The total amount of child support transferred in 2008–09 was \$2,790 million, including \$1,702 million in private collections and \$1,088 million in funds collected by the CSA. This is a 1.0 per cent (\$29 million) decrease on the ‘transfers’ total of \$2,819 million reported in 2007–08 (see table 4.6 and chart 4.4).

Chart 4.4: CSA transfers by collection method



Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Key fact: The total amount of CSA transfers dropped in 2009 by about one per cent.

4.3.1: Collections—CSA collect cases

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

- Employer withholding (EW): monies withheld by the paying parent’s employer and paid directly to the CSA by the employer on the employee’s behalf
- Private payments: monies paid by the paying parent directly to the CSA by cheque or money order
- Tax Refund Intercept Payments (TRIPs): monies intercepted by the 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. These payments are made in lieu of child support and may include money or the payment of medical bills, tuition or school fees.

Table 4.7: Child support payments—percentages

30 June	EW (%)	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	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
2008	39.2	49.1	7.2	4.5
2009	36.0	49.8	10.3	3.9

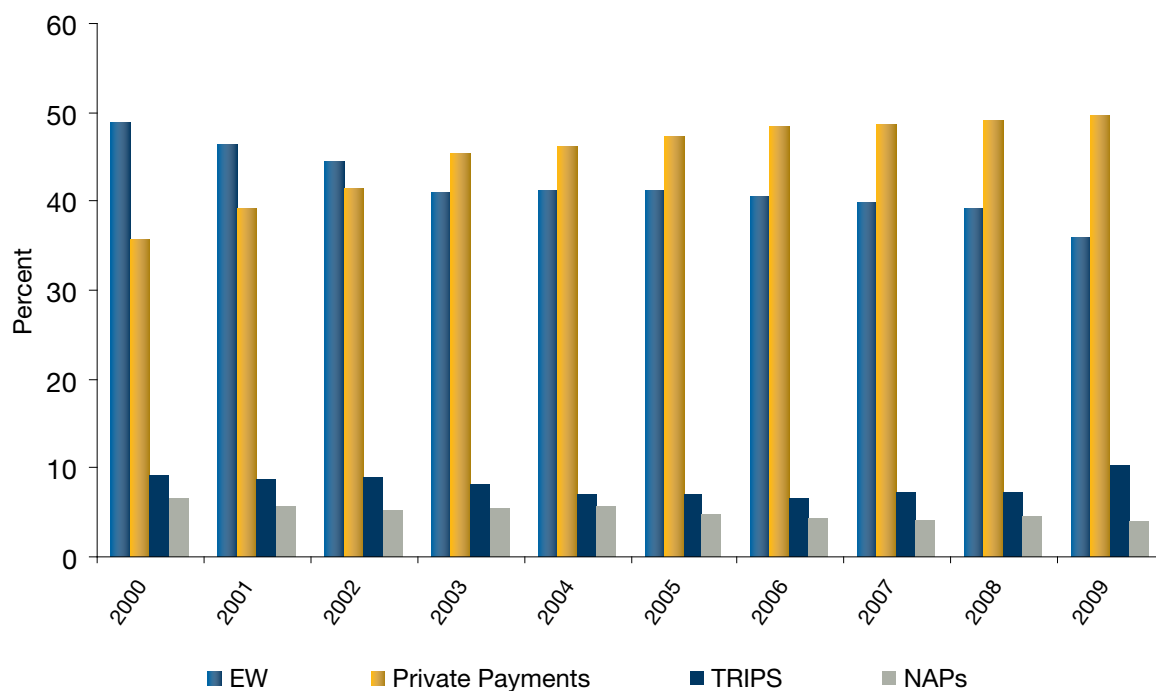
Source: The CSA's Money For Kids (MFK) Report, June 2009.

Notes:

1. The data for 2001–02 relates to the period up to the end February 2002. Data was not available for the remainder of the financial year due to the redevelopment of the CSA's computer system (Cuba).
2. 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 now the most popular way for paying parents to meet their obligations.*

Chart 4.5: CSA payments by method



Source: The CSA's Money For Kids (MFK) Report, June 2009.

Key fact: *There was a significant increase in TRIP payments in 2009. This may be due to the Government's one-off \$900 tax bonus that was reliant on the lodgement of a 2007-08 tax return.*



5.0 Total Child Support Debt and compliance measures

The CSA's approach is to support parents to meet their child support responsibilities. This involves a balance of service, support, education, compliance and enforcement activities. While most parents do the right thing, some need additional support to meet their child support responsibilities.

To ensure the integrity of the Child Support Scheme, the CSA has a range of measures in place to detect non-compliance and ensure parents meet their child support responsibilities, based on their true financial capacity.

5.1 Total Child Support Debt (TCSD)

Total Child Support Debt (TCSD) is the total amount of money that is payable by one child support customer to another and is overdue. The majority of child support debt arises from child support assessments, but a substantial amount of debt is now also associated with international cases.

Table 5.1: Total Child Support Debt (TCSD)

Total debt	30 June 07	(%)	30 June 08	(%)	30 June 09	(%)
Domestic	\$741.9m	77.9	\$778.4m	76.8	\$825.3m	75.8
International	\$209.9m	22.1	\$235.4m	23.2	\$263.4m	24.2
Total	\$951.8m	100.0	\$1,013.8m	100.0	\$1,088.7m	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

TCSD has been steadily rising in the past four years and reached over \$1 billion in June 2008. As shown in table 5.1, the international component of the overall level of debt is also increasing.

International debt is increasing (as a percentage), at a faster rate than domestic debt. In 2008-09 international debt rose by \$28.0 million (11.9 per cent), while domestic debt increased by \$46.9 million (6.0 per cent).

Table 5.2: Total Child Support Debt (TCSD) and its components¹

	A	B	C	D	E	F
30 June	Cumulative net child support debt (\$m)	Write-Off (\$m)	Cumulative TCSD (\$m)	Cumulative TCSD on domestic cases (\$m)	Cumulative TCSD on overseas cases (\$m)	Cumulative TCSD on overseas cases as % of TCSD
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
2008	921.8	91.8	1,013.8	778.4	235.4	23.2
2009	994.4	94.3	1,088.7	825.3	263.4	24.2

Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

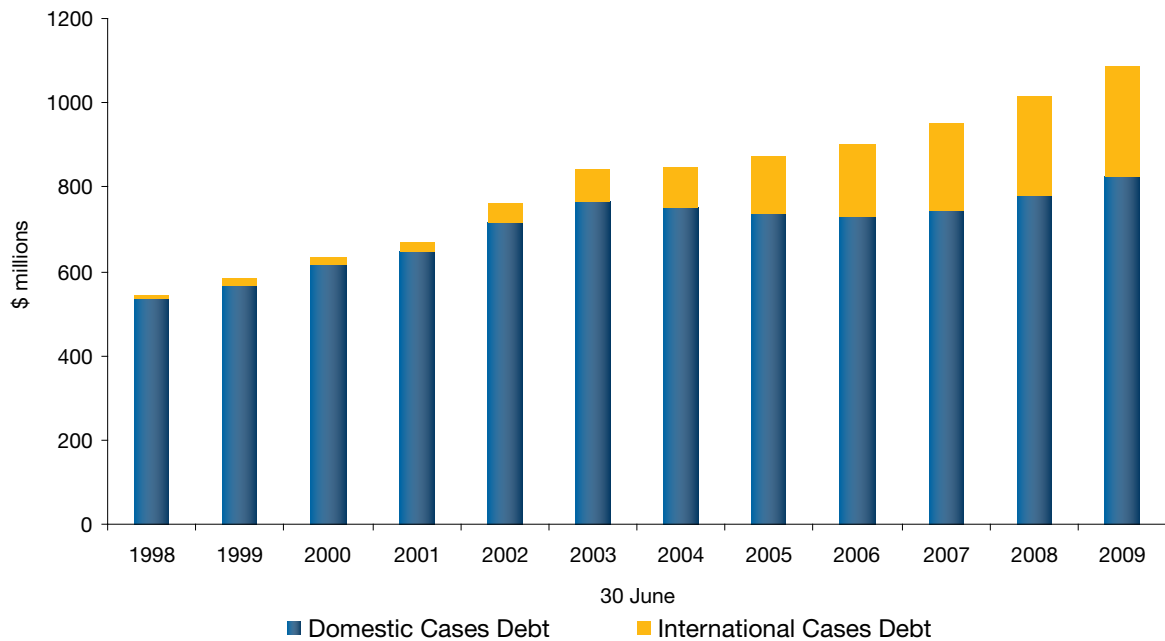
Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

Key fact: *International cases account for 24.2 per cent of TCSD.*

Analysis undertaken by the CSA indicated that TCSD increased between 1999 and 2004. More recently TCSD has continued to increase as a consequence of a number of factors including:

- greater customer demand for particular services
- indexation of the minimum assessment (i.e. \$260 p.a. to \$339 p.a.) and
- increased liabilities due to more effective compliance action, particularly in relation to taxation lodgement enforcement and parents involved in income minimisation. Whilst these compliance actions have led to increased collections, they have also significantly contributed to growth in outstanding child support by increasing child support assessments.

Chart 5.1: Total Child Support Debt and its components



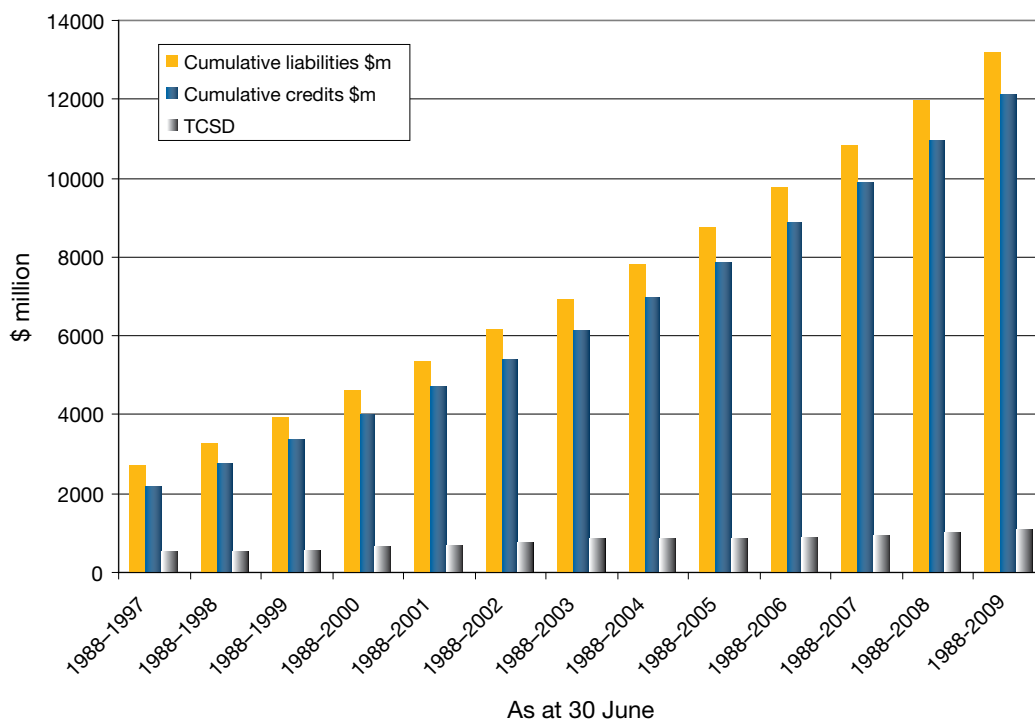
Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Table 5.2 and chart 5.1 record Scheme overdue child support amounts as at the end of the past twelve financial years. Column A in table 5.2 records cumulative Net Maintenance Debt (NMD). Column B records write-off amounts (debt deemed to be currently uncollectible), while column C reports cumulative TCSD, which is calculated by adding NMD and write-off together. Cumulative TCSD associated with overseas cases is recorded in column E, while column F expresses the cumulative TCSD associated with overseas cases as a percentage of all TCSD.

Total cumulative TCSD increased by \$74.9 million (7.4 per cent) between June 2008 and June 2009. This compares with an increase of \$61.8 million (6.5 per cent) in the previous financial year. The majority of the increase in total cumulative TCSD was associated with domestic debt.

Key fact: *TCSD increased by \$74.9 million (7.4 per cent) between June 2008 and June 2009.*

Chart 5.2: Cumulative liabilities, credits and debt for CSA collect cases 1996-2009

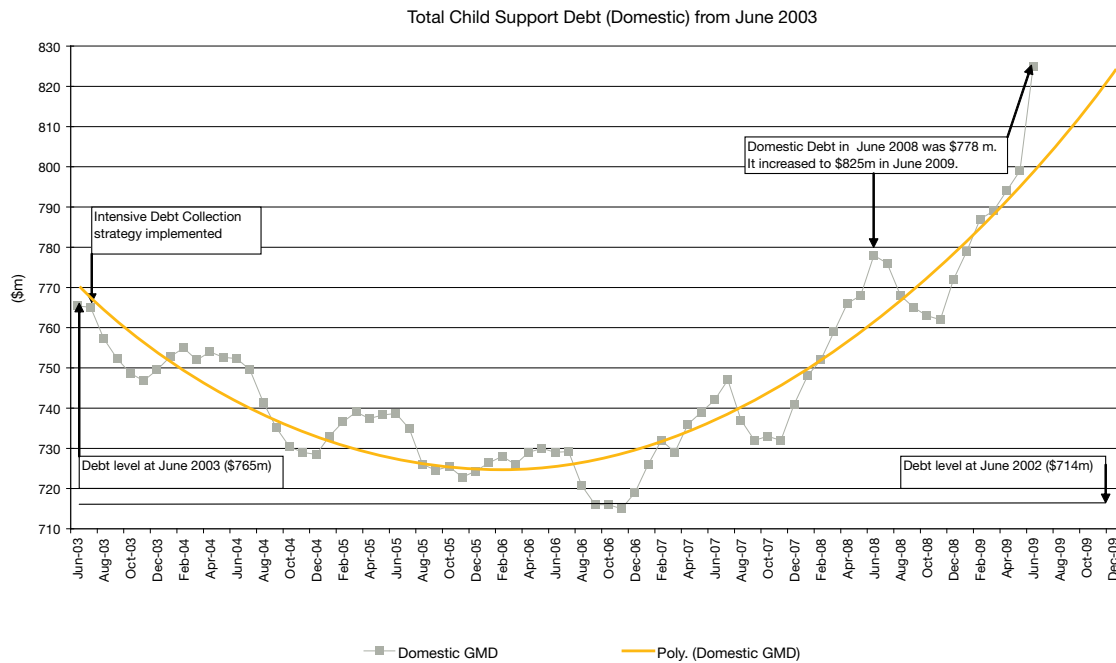


Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Chart 5.2 shows the significant difference between the cumulative TCSD and cumulative liabilities and credits. It demonstrates that while as a single figure TCSD may appear to be high, in comparison to the total amount of child support that has been assessed and collected it is relatively low. In other words the amount of child support that has been paid is significantly greater than what is owed.

Key fact: *While as a single figure TCSD may appear to be high, in comparison to the total amount of child support that has been assessed and collected it is relatively low. In other words the amount of child support that has been paid is significantly greater than what is owed.*

Chart 5.3: Domestic Total Child Support Debt from June 2003



Source: Child Support Report (CS5), CSA, June 2009.

Chart 5.3 shows a decline in the overall growth rate in domestic TCSD between 2003 and 2006. 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 TCSD stood at \$765.4 million and by June 2009 it had increased to \$825.3 million. Growth in TCSD is due to a range of factors, including more accurate assessments of parental income and resources which has led to an increase in domestic debt.

5.2 Paying parent liability and overdue child support

A paying parent liability is the amount of child support they have been assessed to pay. This section demonstrates the liability of parents with overdue child support.

Table 5.3: Summary—percentages of paying parents by amount paid by paying parent liability (excluding nil liabilities) ¹⁻³

Paying parent annual liability ³	Paid 0%			Paid over 75%		
(\$)	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
< min	19.4	22.5	16.9	66.4	63.1	76.2
>min-1,000	11.9	12.4	11.1	58.5	57.5	71.4
1,001-2,000	11.6	11.9	16.7	58.9	57.8	55.9
2,001-3,000	9.9	10.6	16.0	63.9	63.6	54.8
3,001-4,000	6.4	7.4	13.2	69.4	67.7	59.8
4,001-5,000	4.1	5.2	8.5	74.3	72.5	67.5
5,001-10,000	4.1	4.6	4.4	76.9	75.3	76.0
10,001-30,000	4.7	4.5	4.3	74.7	74.9	73.6
30,001+	23.4	19.1	20.2	22.5	28.9	27.1
Total	12.0	13.1	12.3	67.4	65.4	67.9

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

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 2006-07 was \$333 or \$339, depending on the start date of the child support period.

Key fact: *The percentage of parents who paid over 75 per cent of their annual child support liability rose from 65.4 per cent in 2007-08 to 67.9 per cent in 2008-09.*

The following tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 compare the levels of compliance among CSA collect customers for the 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09 financial years. This is summarised in table 5.3. From these tables it is evident that in 2008-09 there are fewer customers (in percentage terms) falling into the 'Paid 0 %' (13.1 per cent in 2007-08, down to 12.3 per cent in 2008-09). It is also noted from the three tables that the percentage of CSA collect paying parents who paid over 75 per cent has increased from 65.4 per cent in 2007-08 to 67.9 per cent in 2008-09.

Table 5.4: Paying parent liability by % paid in 2006-07 for CSA collect active customers (excl. nil liabilities), June 2007

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: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2007.

Table 5.5: Paying parent liability by % paid in 2007-08 for CSA collect active customers (excl. nil liabilities), June 2008

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	(%)
< 339	25,686	22.5	3,656	3.2	5,233	4.6	7,533	6.6	28,210	24.7	43,827	38.4	114,145	100.0
340-1,000	4,763	12.4	2,856	7.4	4,106	10.7	4,593	12.0	7,947	20.7	14,137	36.8	38,402	100.0
1,001-2,000	3,866	11.9	4,263	13.2	2,788	8.6	2,772	8.6	5,430	16.8	13,261	41.0	32,380	100.0
2,001-3,000	2,989	10.6	3,243	11.5	1,879	6.7	2,441	8.7	5,547	19.7	12,082	42.9	28,181	100.0
3,001-4,000	1,770	7.4	2,293	9.6	1,545	6.5	2,081	8.8	5,204	21.9	10,886	45.8	23,779	100.0
4,001-5,000	992	5.2	1,510	7.8	1,175	6.1	1,607	8.4	4,700	24.4	9,257	48.1	19,241	100.0
5,001-10,000	2,400	4.6	3,581	6.9	2,866	5.5	3,987	7.7	13,214	25.5	25,799	49.8	51,847	100.0
10,001-30,000	1,096	4.5	1,849	7.5	1,393	5.7	1,839	7.5	6,394	26.0	12,009	48.9	24,580	100.0
30,001+	159	19.1	302	36.2	84	10.1	48	5.8	99	11.9	142	17.0	834	100.0
Total	43,721	13.1	23,553	7.1	21,069	6.3	26,901	8.1	76,745	23.0	141,400	42.4	333,389	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2008.

Table 5.6: Paying parent liability by % paid in 2008-09 for CSA collect active customers (excluding nil liabilities), June 2009

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	(%)
≤ 356	12,816	16.9	1,085	1.4	1,697	2.2	2,375	3.1	7,676	10.1	50,051	66.1	75,700	100.0
357-1,000	4,931	11.1	1,882	4.2	2,579	5.8	3,303	7.4	6,801	15.3	24,941	56.1	44,437	100.0
1,001-2,000	7,619	16.7	3,581	7.9	4,015	8.8	4,889	10.7	8,120	17.9	17,266	38.0	45,490	100.0
2,001-3,000	6,258	16.0	3,967	10.2	4,355	11.2	3,089	7.9	6,937	17.8	14,449	37.0	39,055	100.0
3,001-4,000	4,142	13.2	3,288	10.5	2,768	8.8	2,414	7.7	6,311	20.1	12,440	39.7	31,363	100.0
4,001-5,000	1,971	8.5	2,436	10.5	1,402	6.0	1,739	7.5	5,377	23.1	10,334	44.4	23,259	100.0
5,001-10,000	2,342	4.4	3,648	6.8	2,916	5.4	3,967	7.4	14,836	27.7	25,879	48.3	53,588	100.0
10,001-30,000	999	4.3	1,828	7.9	1,422	6.2	1,819	7.9	6,358	27.6	10,569	46.0	22,995	100.0
30,001+	174	20.2	341	39.6	79	9.2	34	3.9	95	11.0	139	16.1	862	100.0
Total	41,252	12.3	22,056	6.5	21,233	6.3	23,629	7.0	62,511	18.6	166,068	49.3	336,749	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Table 5.7 below provides the number of CSA collect paying parents by level and percentage as well as the amount of their child support liability paid during the 2008-09 year. The percentages in the table record what proportion of the customers, in a particular column, are found in each of the Australian states and territories. The final column then records the percentage of all CSA collect paying parents that are found in each of the states and territories.

Table 5.7: Paying parent by state and by % paid in 2008-2009 for CSA collect customers, June 2009

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	(%)
ACT	1,219	3.0	320	1.5	297	1.4	352	1.5	982	1.6	2,463	1.5	5,633	1.7
NSW	9,092	22.0	5,227	23.7	5,460	25.7	6,239	26.4	17,387	27.8	48,488	29.2	91,893	27.3
NT	335	0.8	297	1.3	273	1.3	309	1.3	791	1.3	1,891	1.1	3,896	1.2
Qld	8,077	19.6	5,489	24.9	5,393	25.4	5,993	25.4	14,881	23.8	36,976	22.3	76,809	22.8
SA	2,414	5.9	1,576	7.1	1,672	7.9	1,882	8.0	5,612	9.0	14,729	8.9	27,885	8.3
Tas	542	1.3	324	1.5	464	2.2	588	2.4	1,835	2.9	4,940	3.0	8,673	2.6
Vic	6,674	16.2	3,899	17.7	3,951	18.6	4,501	19.0	12,874	20.6	36,124	21.8	68,023	20.2
WA	2,893	7.0	2,098	9.5	1,978	9.3	2,268	9.6	5,958	9.5	15,115	9.1	30,310	9.0
International	9,949	24.1	2,817	12.8	1,733	8.2	1,506	6.4	2,175	3.5	5,283	3.2	23,463	7.0
Unknown	57	0.1	9	0.0	12	0.1	11	0.0	16	0.0	59	0.0	164	0.0
Total	41,252	100.0	22,056	100.0	21,233	100.0	23,629	100.0	62,511	100.0	166,068	100.0	336,749	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Key fact: Of the total number of CSA collect paying parents who paid 100 per cent of their liability, 29.2 per cent lived in NSW.

Table 5.8 below shows the mean and total values for the liability, TCSD and payments for the 2008-2009 financial year on a state by state basis.

Table 5.8: Liability and TCSD for all cases by state, June 2009¹

Paying parent state	Liability		Total Child Support Debt (including Write-Off debt)		Number of cases	%
	Mean \$	Total \$	Mean \$	Total \$		
ACT	3,794.8	48,873,432	1,869.4	24,076,066	12,879	1.6
NSW	3,465.3	823,045,953	990.2	235,180,984	237,511	28.7
NT	3,663.9	31,000,402	1,222.2	10,341,065	8,461	1.0
Qld	3,427.1	644,878,321	1,192.3	224,351,496	188,169	22.7
SA	3,058.7	218,692,808	827.5	59,166,507	71,498	8.6
Tas	2,594.2	55,624,020	588.4	12,616,430	21,442	2.6
Vic	3,558.5	636,579,066	980.8	175,453,089	178,888	21.6
WA	4,271.7	294,031,678	1,202.7	82,785,830	68,832	8.3
International	2,871.2	114,183,667	6,623.6	263,406,988	39,768	4.8
Unknown	1,015.4	317,820	4,254.7	1,331,723	313	0.0
Total	3,463.8	2,867,227,167	1,315.2	1,088,710,178	827,761	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Note: Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Table 5.9: Paying parent liability by level of debt in 2008-09

Amount of overdue child support	Annual child support liability						Total
	\$0	\$1-338	\$339	\$340-1,000	\$1,001-5,000	\$5,001+	
\$0	380,685	37,100	141	17,127	47,661	36,768	519,482
\$1-356	10,338	22,027	129	12,593	17,319	5,840	68,246
\$357-1,000	4,255	4,592	32	8,149	15,177	5,252	37,457
\$1,001-5,000	9,509	6,858	31	6,195	42,377	12,379	77,349
\$5,001-10,000	4,414	2,161	17	1,959	11,253	7,542	27,346
\$10,001+	5,583	1,524	7	1,644	10,708	11,026	30,492
Total	414,784	74,262	357	47,667	144,495	78,807	760,372

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Key fact: 46.7 per cent of paying parents who have a liability of greater than \$5,000 a year have no overdue child support.

Table 5.9 shows the amount of child support owed by paying parents in comparison to their child support liability. Paying parents with an annual liability of \$0 in 2008-09 may still have overdue child support as they may have incurred this debt prior to being assessed at nil liability. For example, there are more than 19,000 customers who are currently on a nil liability who owe over \$1,000 in child support.

It also shows that 30,492 (4.0 per cent of the total) paying parents owe more than \$10,000 in child support.

5.3 Paying parent TCSD by child support income

The following shows the amount of overdue child support in comparison to the amount of a paying parent's child support income.

Table 5.10: Paying parent TCSD by child support income, June 2009 (all cases)¹⁻³

Overdue child support amount (\$)	\$0-12,000 Child support income				\$12,001-20,000 Child support income				\$ 20,001-50,000 Child support income				\$ 50,000+ Child support income				Total	
	No. of customers	No. (%)	Sum (\$m)	Sum (%)	No. of customers	No. (%)	Sum (\$m)	Sum (%)	No. of customers	No. (%)	Sum (\$m)	Sum (%)	No. of customers	No. (%)	Sum (\$m)	Sum (%)		
0	93,522	46.0	0.0	0.0	81,878	70.4	0.0	0.0	227,711	70.1	0.0	0.0	154,585	84.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	
1-356	36,526	18.0	3.7	0.9	16,343	14.0	1.5	1.8	20,519	6.3	2.8	0.6	6,537	3.6	0.9	0.6	8.9	
357-500	5,565	2.7	2.4	0.6	1,703	1.5	0.7	0.9	4,454	1.4	1.9	0.4	1,531	0.8	0.7	0.4	5.6	
501-1,000	12,630	6.2	9.2	2.2	3,751	3.2	2.7	3.2	10,839	3.3	7.9	1.8	3,555	1.9	2.6	1.8	22.5	
1,001-2,000	14,593	7.2	21.1	5.1	3,712	3.2	5.4	6.3	14,284	4.4	21.0	4.8	3,791	2.1	5.5	3.7	52.9	
2,001-5,000	18,608	9.2	59.8	14.4	4,314	3.7	13.9	16.3	22,441	6.9	73.5	16.7	5,525	3.0	18.0	12.2	165.3	
5,001-10,000	10,723	5.3	76.2	18.4	2,531	2.2	18.0	21.2	12,437	3.8	87.7	19.9	3,677	2.0	26.2	17.7	208.1	
>10,001	11,039	5.4	242.1	58.4	2,130	1.8	42.7	50.4	12,160	3.7	246.1	55.8	4,147	2.3	94.4	63.7	625.4	
Total	203,206	100.0	414.5	100.0	116,362	100.0	84.9	100.0	324,845	100.0	441.0	100.0	183,348	100.0	148.3	100.0	1,088.7	
																	100.0	

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. This table records Total Child Support Debt (TCSD) 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 the CSA collect and private collect cases that have ended with arrears.

Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Key fact: *Over half of the total outstanding child support debt (\$625.4 million) is made up of individual customer debts greater than \$10,000.*

Table 5.10 shows the number of paying parents in each income range by the size of TCSD attributable to both current liability cases and cases ended with arrears.

In 2008-09 TCSD increased from \$1,013.8 million to \$1,088.7 million. Significantly however overdue child support associated with paying parents with incomes of between \$0-\$12,000 and \$12,001-\$20,000 annually decreased. This decrease is largely the result of a new legislative power, introduced in July 2008 allowing CSA to withhold a proportion of a paying parent's Centrelink benefits when that parent has overdue child support.

Table 5.10 shows that 3.6 per cent of paying parents have overdue child support of greater than \$10,000. The overdue child support associated with these paying parents, however, comprises 57.4 per cent of the total outstanding child support. Of equal note is the \$414.5 million (or 38.1 per cent) of overdue child support associated with paying parents who have child support incomes of \$12,000 or less.

While 69.5 per cent of domestic cases in table 5.11 have no overdue amount, only 25.8 per cent of international cases have no amount of outstanding child support. Only 2.8 per cent of domestic cases have outstanding child support of over \$10,000 but 19.3 per cent of international cases have overdue amounts of over \$10,000.

Key fact: *\$414.5 million (or 38.1 per cent) of overdue child support associated with paying parents who have child support incomes of \$12,000 or less.*

Table 5.11: Paying parent TCSD – domestic and international cases, June 2009¹⁻³

Overdue child support (\$)	Domestic				International				Total			
	No.	No. (%)	Sum (\$m)	Sum (%)	No.	No. (%)	Sum (\$m)	Sum (%)	No.	No. (%)	Sum (\$m)	Sum (%)
0	547,432	69.5	0.0	0.0	10,264	25.8	0.0	0.0	557,696	67.4	0.0	0.0
1-356	76,151	9.7	8.4	1.0	3,774	9.5	0.5	0.2	79,925	9.7	8.9	0.8
357-500	12,399	1.6	5.3	0.6	854	2.1	0.4	0.1	13,253	1.6	5.6	0.5
501-1,000	28,548	3.6	20.8	2.5	2,227	5.6	1.6	0.6	30,775	3.7	22.5	2.1
1,001-2,000	32,705	4.2	47.5	5.8	3,675	9.2	5.4	2.1	36,380	4.4	52.9	4.9
2,001-5,000	43,951	5.6	142.4	17.3	6,937	17.4	22.8	8.7	50,888	6.1	165.3	15.2
5,001-10,000	24,992	3.2	176.5	21.4	4,376	11.0	31.6	12.0	29,368	3.5	208.1	19.1
>10,001	21,815	2.8	424.4	51.4	7,661	19.3	201.0	76.3	29,476	3.6	625.4	57.4
Total	787,993	100.0	825.3	100.0	39,768	100.0	263.4	100.0	827,761	100.0	1,088.7	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. This table records Total Child Support Debt (TCSD) 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.

Approximately 40,000 cases are created for administrative purposes when the care of children is shared between parents, the inclusion of these cases influences the proportions being reported in the table above.

Key fact: 12.6 per cent of international parents owe between \$2,001-5,000 in child support.

Table 5.12: TCSD for paying parents with overdue amounts only, June 2009 ^{1, 2}

Total paying parent income (\$)	Domestic				International				Total			
	No.	No. (%)	Sum (\$m)	Sum (%)	No.	No. (%)	Sum (\$m)	Sum (%)	No.	No. (%)	Sum (\$m)	Sum (%)
0-12,000	94,377	39.2	291.7	35.3	15,307	51.9	122.8	46.6	109,684	40.6	414.5	38.1
12,001-20,000	32,844	13.7	73.5	8.9	1,640	5.6	11.3	4.3	34,484	12.8	84.9	7.8
20,001-50,000	87,019	36.2	348.3	42.2	10,115	34.3	92.7	35.2	97,134	36.0	441.0	40.5
50,000+	26,321	10.9	111.7	13.5	2,442	8.3	36.6	13.9	28,763	10.7	148.3	13.6
Total	240,561	100.0	825.3	100.0	29,504	100.0	263.4	100.0	270,065	100.0	1,088.7	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Notes:

1. This table records Total Child Support Debt (TCSD) 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.

Key fact: *Paying parents in Australia whose child support income was between \$20,001-50,000 owe the highest amount (\$348.3 million) of domestic child support debt.*

Table 5.12 shows that 39.2 per cent of domestic paying parents with overdue amounts were in the \$0–12,000 income range, and their overdue amounts accounted for 35.3 per cent of the domestic TCSD. This compares with 51.9 per cent of international paying parents with outstanding child support who have incomes of \$12,000 or less and account for 46.6 per cent of the TCSD associated with all international cases. Approximately 10.9 per cent of domestic paying parents, with overdue amounts, had incomes of \$50,000 or higher and they accounted for 13.5 per cent of the TCSD associated with domestic cases. Of international paying parents with outstanding child support, 8.3 per cent had incomes of \$50,000 and over, and accounted for 13.9 per cent of the international TCSD.

Table 5.13: Number of paying parents with overdue child support who have not paid anything for the life of the case, June 2009

Paying parent' child support income	Number of non-paying parents	% of non-paying parents	Total paying parents	% of total paying parents
\$0–5,000	7,754	44.7	99,570	13.1
\$5,001–10,000	532	3.1	36,102	4.8
\$10,001–25,000	1,768	10.2	187,744	24.7
\$25,001–50,000	6,456	37.2	264,490	34.8
50,001–\$75,000	582	3.4	109,885	14.5
\$75,001–\$100,000	163	0.9	37,216	4.9
\$100,001+	92	0.5	25,365	3.3
Total	17,347	100.0	760,372	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Table 5.13 shows that there are 17,347 paying parents who have paid nothing over the life of their case. This is 2.3 per cent of the total number of paying customers in 2008-09.

The segment with the highest percentage of parents who paid nothing in the life of their case is that group of parents with an income of \$5,000 or less. Some parents in this group may be eligible to be assessed to pay no child support, but have not provided the correct information to the CSA.

Key fact: 17,347 paying parents who have paid nothing over the life of their case

Table 5.14: Paying parent with arrears by level of income, June 2009

Paying parents child support	Total paying parents with arrears	% of paying parents with arrears	Number of total paying parents
\$0–5,000	63,949	26.6	99,570
\$5,001–10,000	14,524	6.0	36,102
\$10,001–25,000	58,750	24.4	187,744
\$25,001–50,000	77,513	32.2	264,490
\$50,001–75,000	18,463	7.7	109,885
\$75,000–100,000	5,029	2.1	37,216
\$100,001+	2,662	1.1	25,365
Total	240,890	100.0	760,372

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Key fact: In June 2009 there were 519,482 paying parents who did not owe any child support.

Table 5.15: CSA collect paying parents who did not pay child support in 2008-09

Paying parent child support income	CSA collect paying parents paid nothing in 2008-09	(%)	CSA collect paying parents paid something, or all in 2008-09	(%)	Total	
					CSA collect paying parents	(%)
\$0-5,000	27,303	7.5	46,566	12.9	73,869	20.4
\$5,001-10,000	2,620	0.7	17,458	4.8	20,078	5.5
\$10,001-25,000	11,817	3.3	86,492	23.9	98,309	27.1
\$25,001-50,000	19,002	5.2	93,022	25.7	112,024	30.9
\$50,001-75,000	2,199	0.6	36,905	10.2	39,104	10.8
\$75,001-100,000	575	0.2	11,278	3.1	11,853	3.3
\$100,001+	361	0.1	6,910	1.9	7,271	2.0
Total CSA collect	63,877	17.6	298,631	82.4	362,508	100.0

Source: Customer Research Extract, CSA, June 2009.

Key fact: *0.6 per cent of parents who earned \$50,001-75,000 have paid no child support in 2008-09.*

Table 5.15 shows the number of paying parents who paid nothing in the 2008-09 financial year and those who paid part or all of their liability. Similar to table 5.14, the main group of parents who paid nothing were those who had an income of less than \$5,000. Some 82.4 per cent of all CSA collect paying parents paid at least some child support in 2008-09.

5.4 Compliance measures

Parents who are not motivated to meet their child support responsibilities may structure their personal and financial affairs to avoid or minimise child support. The CSA has a comprehensive compliance program that aims to ensure that children are supported by their parents. This program includes a range of measures to detect non-compliance and ensure parents meet their child support responsibilities based on their true financial capacity. These measures include:

- Employer withholding where a parent's employer deducts payments from their salary and wages
- Intensive Debt Collection measures
- Issuing Departure Prohibition orders against parents who have failed to pay their child support and wish to travel overseas to stop them from leaving the country until they pay their outstanding child support
- Litigation and prosecution
- Investigating possible cases of income minimisation
- Referring parents who do not lodge a tax return to the ATO for lodgement enforcement activity
- Intercepting tax refunds and income support payments to collect outstanding payments.

Table 5.16 below shows numbers of these measures implemented by the CSA and amount of child support collected as a result of these measures in 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Table 5.16: Measures to increase payments and reduce debt

	2007-2008	2008-2009
Departure Prohibition Orders (DPOs)		
Issued	924	427
Finalised	538	n/a
Total collected	\$5.7m	\$5.0m
Intensive Debt Collection (IDC)		
Actioned	26,385	19,787
Attributed collections	\$28.4m	\$49.4m
Tax Refund Intercept (TRIPS)		
Number of intercepts	87,819	114,942
Amount collected	\$76.0m	\$114.9m
Employer withholding of arrears (automatic salary deductions)		
Customers	74,840	70,763
Number of employers	30,319	28,967
Amount collected	\$412.3m	\$402.2m
Litigation (court proceedings)		
Case finalised	631	559
Net reduction in debt	\$15.3m	\$12.2m
Income minimisers		
Investigations finalised (inc finalised no change)	5,886	4,135
Liability corrected	\$24.7m	\$19.7m
Amount collected	\$12.5m	\$18.7m
Total collected through this program	\$550.2m	\$602.4m

Source: Compliance Team, CSA, June 2009.

Table 5.16 shows that through the compliance program the CSA has collected \$602.4 million in 2008-09. The two most successful programs were employer withholding of arrears (\$402 million) and Tax Refund Intercepts (\$114.9 million). Employer withholding of arrears is a collection method, where the CSA can require a paying parent's employer to deduct a specified amount of overdue child support, as well as their current child support liability, directly from their wages or salary. The Tax Return Intercepts Program (TRIPs) works directly with the ATO, who advises the CSA when a tax return has been completed by a paying parent, and a refund is available and is about to be paid. The CSA may take the refund and apply it to meet an outstanding child support payment.



6.0 CSA people and service options

The CSA is represented throughout Australia, with offices located in every state and territory. There are 14 major metropolitan sites and 27 Regional Service Centres (RSCs), helping CSA to connect with customers in regional and rural Australia. Here staff can deliver improved access to CSA services and use their local presence to offer a more personalised service.

6.1 CSA people

At the CSA over 70 per cent of CSA staff are involved in some form of direct customer service, however we also employ people from a broad range of specialised areas like business, communication and media, administration, project management and staff training.

Table 6.1: CSA Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff by region and Australian Public Service (APS) level, June 2009

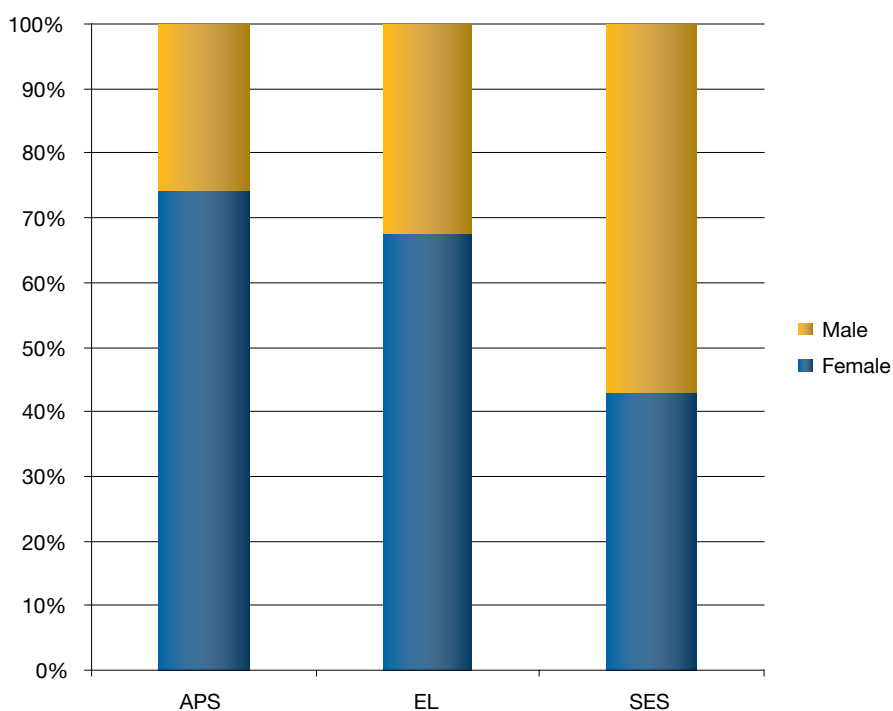
	APS	Executive Level	Senior Executive Service	Total
National Office	661.2	188.4	15.8	865.4
ACT/NSW	879.8	46.1	2.0	928.0
Qld	584.1	34.3	1.0	619.4
SA/NT	336.6	15.0	1.0	352.6
Tas	169.2	10.6	1.0	180.7
Vic	646.6	33.8	1.0	681.4
WA	186.3	13.8	1.0	201.1
Total	3,463.8	342.0	22.8	3,828.6

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2009.

Key fact: *Staff Full-Time Equivalents have decreased by five per cent in 2008-09.*

At the end of June 2009 there were 3,828.6 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff in the CSA. This is 202 (5.0 per cent) less FTE staff than June 2008.

Chart 6.1: Percentage of total CSA FTE staff by gender



Source: Child Support Agency, June 2009.

Table 6.2: CSA FTE staff pay scale groups by APS level and gender

	Female		Male	
Pay scale group	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
APS	2,573.3	74.3	890.5	25.7
Executive Level	231.9	67.8	110.1	32.2
Senior Exec. Service	9.8	43.0	13.0	57.0
Total	2,815.0	73.5	1,013.6	26.5

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2009.

Chart 6.1 and table 6.2 show the percentage differences between the CSA staff (male and female) and compares the different pay scale groups.

6.2 Service options

The CSA offers a range of services to customers to make their dealings with the agency easier. These include face-to-face, online and telephone services.

In 2008-09 the CSA's service delivery staff were located in all 14 metropolitan and 27 regional service sites.

Staff are available to take calls from customers on a daily basis during business hours (between 8.30am and 4.45pm EST). Customers will generally call the CSA's main phone number **131 272** (call charges may apply).

The CSA website (www.csa.gov.au) includes a range of up-to-date information and other resources to support separated families.

CSAonline is the CSA's secure online service and was developed to provide an online service channel option for customers as an alternative to phone, mail or face-to-face.

6.2.1 CSA telephone performance

Research has established that CSA customers prefer communicating by telephone. Recognising this fact, the CSA has allocated considerable time and funding to improve its telephone system. This effort is reflected in the telephone performance statistics in table 6.3.

Table 6.3: 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) per day ⁴
1994	5,000	n/a	n/a	5,000
1995	9,000	80.0% in 3 mins	n/a	9,000
1996	6,000	80.0% in 2 mins	n/a	6,000
1997	8,000	90.0% 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	86.0% in 2 mins	4,681	13,200
2000	8,450	87.0% 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 ⁵	9,221	96.6% in 2 mins 89.3% in 30 secs	8,060	17,281
2007	9,178	94.7% in 2 mins 84.6% in 30 secs	7,966	17,143
2008	9,264	90.0% in 2 mins 78.4% in 30 secs	6,727	15,991
2009	9,672	82.4% in 2 mins 68.3% in 30 secs	5,954	15,626

Source: The 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 into 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 6,727. 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.
5. The 2005–06 figures have been revised from the figures recorded in previous editions of *Facts and Figures*, making these data consistent with other data in the table.

Key fact: In 2008–09 68.3 per cent of phone calls were answered within 30 seconds.

In 2006–07 the CSA received on average 17,143 calls per day, by 2008–09 the average was 15,626. In 2008–09, 68.3 per cent of calls were answered within 30 seconds and 82.4 per cent within two minutes.

6.2.2 CSA face-to-face service

The CSA aims to work closely across the Department of Human Services portfolio to provide integrated whole-of-Government services. The CSA ensure that all customers have access to the most appropriate service channel to meet their needs. Customers requiring additional support can meet face to face with CSP staff.

- The CSA has offices in 14 major sites, including Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart.
- There are 27 Regional Service Centres (RSCs) co-located with Centrelink.
- The CSA also conducts mobile circuits (outreach visits) visiting rural, regional and some remote locations. These circuits incorporate Indigenous outreach and face-to-face meetings with incarcerated customers.
- The CSA's locations are listed on the CSA website or customers can call **131 272** and ask about the location of a CSA office closest to them.

6.2.3 CSA website – www.csa.gov.au

The CSA website provides information for customers, stakeholders, media, government and the community. This includes information on child support in general, changes in legislation and various publications that are available for download. Furthermore, there are links to family service groups, affiliated government agencies and other CSA initiatives such as CSAonline.

In 2007-2008 there were 1,569,561 unique visits to the CSA website. A unique visit relates to how many individuals visited a website.

In total, there were 2,882,765 visits to the CSA website. A visit is how many times the website is visited in general, and this figure includes the same people coming back multiple times.

6.2.4 CSA online

CSAonline is a secure online service for international and domestic parents and employers. The service enables parents and employers to view and update their personal details, access most of their letters from the CSA and check their payment history and/or employee deductions.

As at 30 June 2009 there were a total of 93,062 customers and 3,469 employers registered for CSAonline. During 2008-2009 there were 8,846 enrolments by customers and 160 enrolments by employers. This is an increase of 15.65 per cent. The total number of enrolled users on 30 June 2008 was, 89,539.

More information on CSAonline is available in Chapter 8.2.

7.0 Customer satisfaction, complaints and objections

In line with the CSA's focus on providing excellent customer service, the Agency collects a range of data that assists in measuring customer satisfaction levels with the CSA's services, and data about the number of customer complaints and objections.

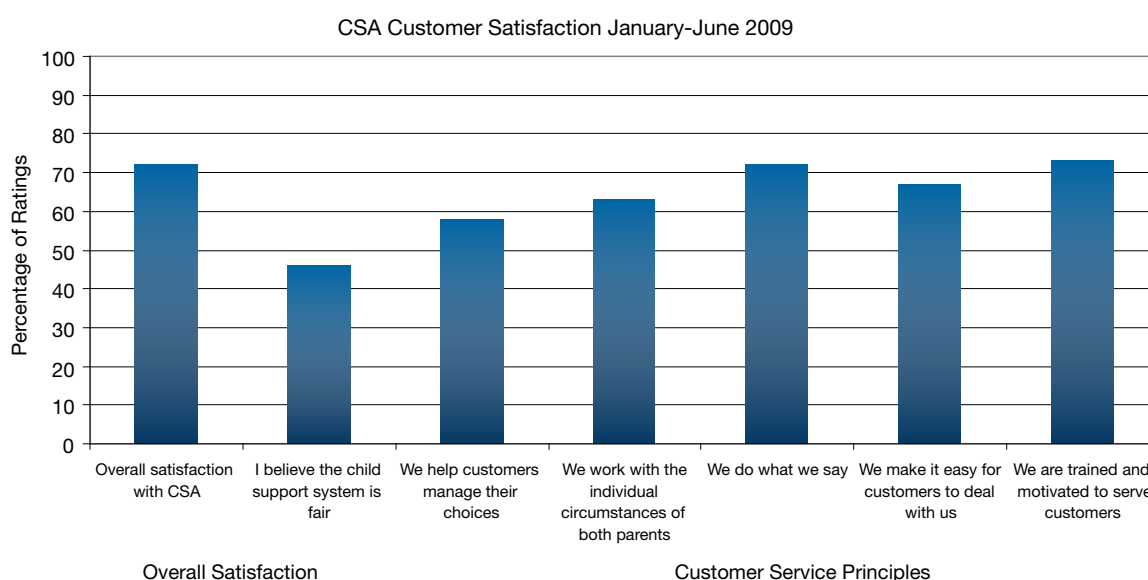
7.1 CSA customer service satisfaction

Customers Having a Say (CHAS) is a phone-based survey that measures customer satisfaction immediately following telephone interaction with CSA staff. It is delivered via an interactive telephone survey offered to CSA customers who contact the Agency by telephone. On average around 1,560 customers participate in the CHAS survey each month.

A new version of CHAS was implemented in January 2009 to measure customer satisfaction with the CSA's new Customer Service Principles. Previously CHAS measured performance against the former Customer Service Charter elements.

CHAS measures customer satisfaction with the CSA overall, and with five of the CSA's Customer Service Principles. Several questions are asked in relation to each principle, 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 the CSA.

Chart 7.1: Overall customer satisfaction rating for January-June 2009



Source: Customers Having a Say (CHAS) survey, June 2009.

Note: Data has not been provided for July-December 2008 as customer satisfaction was reported on a different scale during this period and is not comparable to current data.

Key fact: Between 1,200 and 1,500 customers participate in the CHAS survey each month.

7.2 Complaints and objections

The number of customer complaints and objections to decisions is one measure of the level of satisfaction of customers in regards to the service given by the CSA.

7.2.1 Objections

CSA customers have the right to object to a decision made by the Agency if they believe that the CSA has:

- used incorrect information
- not considered all the facts
- overlooked relevant details in making a decision (or new information has become available) or
- not applied the law correctly.

Key fact: *Paying parents submitted 58 per cent of all finalised objection applications.*

Table 7.1 shows that there has been a significant increase in the total number of finalised objections between 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, with an additional 10,761 objections being finalised. This increase is likely to be largely the result of the introduction of stage 3 of the Child Support Scheme Reforms on 1 July 2008.

Table 7.1: Objections finalised by reason, 2008-2009

Objection type	Initiated by	Allowed		Disallowed		Partially disallowed		Invalid, withdrawn or blank		Total objections finalised		% of total by type	
		No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	(%)	(%)
Change of Assessment	Paying parent	587	69.1	1,417	72.9	795	71.5	967	70.6	4,733	71.2	17.3	
	Receiving parent	263	30.9	527	27.1	317	28.5	403	29.4	1,913	28.8	7.0	
	Total	850	100.0	1,944	100.0	1,112	100.0	1,370	100.0	6,646	100.0	24.2	
Income details	Paying parent	80	67.2	158	66.7	20	76.9	571	62.4	1,400	63.3	5.1	
	Receiving parent	39	32.8	79	33.3	6	23.1	344	37.6	812	36.7	3.0	
	Total	119	100.0	237	100.0	26	100.0	915	100.0	2,212	100.0	8.1	
Non-Agency payment credit	Paying parent	31	9.2	79	39.3	20	19.2	69	27.0	268	23.2	1.0	
	Receiving parent	307	90.8	122	60.7	84	80.8	187	73.1	887	76.8	3.2	
	Total	338	100.0	201	100.0	104	100.0	256	100.0	1,155	100.0	4.2	
Particulars of assessment - Estimate	Paying parent	177	43.4	207	34.6	72	59.0	482	31.9	1,420	34.2	5.2	
	Receiving parent	231	56.6	392	65.4	50	41.0	1,028	68.1	2,729	65.8	10.0	
	Total	408	100.0	599	100.0	122	100.0	1,510	100.0	4,149	100.0	15.1	
Particulars of assessment - Level of care	Paying parent	861	57.8	616	64.5	255	64.7	1,015	60.3	3,762	60.6	13.7	
	Receiving parent	629	42.2	339	35.5	139	35.3	669	39.7	2,445	39.4	8.9	
	Total	1,490	100.0	955	100.0	394	100.0	1,684	100.0	6,207	100.0	22.6	
Particulars of assessment - Other	Paying parent	248	53.9	360	68.4	76	72.4	1,071	67.4	2,826	66.2	10.3	
	Receiving parent	212	46.1	166	31.6	29	27.6	517	32.6	1,441	33.8	5.3	
	Total	460	100.0	526	100.0	105	100.0	1,588	100.0	4,267	100.0	15.6	
Other	Paying parent	241	59.7	478	79.4	120	82.2	545	66.3	1,929	69.0	7.0	
	Receiving parent	163	40.4	124	20.6	26	17.8	277	33.7	867	31.0	3.2	
	Total	404	100.0	602	100.0	146	100.0	822	100.0	2,796	100.0	10.2	
Total objections finalised	Paying parent	2,225	54.7	3,315	65.5	1,358	67.6	4,720	58.0	16,338	59.6	59.6	
	Receiving parent	1,844	45.3	1,749	34.5	651	32.4	3,425	42.0	11,094	40.4	40.4	
	Total	4,069	100.0	5,064	100.0	2,009	100.0	8,145	100.0	27,432	100.0	100.0	

Source: The CSA COGNOS Portal - The Objections Monthly Report as at June 2009.

7.2.2 Social Security Appeals Tribunal

The Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT) provides an independent external review of CSA decisions about customers' objections to child support assessments or the collection of child support (objection decisions) and decisions to refuse an extension of time to object. The SSAT provides an inexpensive and informal mechanism for customers seeking to review a decision and provides a mechanism to ensure that CSA decisions are transparent and consistent.

In 2008-09, the SSAT received 2,895 applications to review an objection decision, or around 14 per cent of objection decisions made by CSA during 2008-09, which is a decline from the previous year of 3 per cent. Of these, 2,491 were determined to be valid and 404 invalid. Generally, applications for review were ruled invalid because no objection decision had been made before the customer appealed to the SSAT. The percentage of invalid appeals to the SSAT decreased from the 2007-08 year. The SSAT made decisions on 1,667 appeals during the 2008-09 year.

7.2.3 Complaints

The CSA continually works to provide excellent customer service. However, if a parent is not satisfied with the service the CSA has provided, or they do not agree with the CSA's actions, there are avenues available to make a complaint.

The CSA has a three step complaints process:

Step one: Parents are asked to contact the CSA and speak to a Customer Service Officer who will try to solve the problem.

Step two: If the parent is still not satisfied, they may ask to speak to the Customer Service Officer's Team Leader.

Step three: If the parent is still not satisfied, they are able to call the CSA's Complaints Service on **132 919** (call charges may apply) and speak to a Complaints Resolution Officer, who will independently look at the complaint.

If a parent has been unable to resolve a complaint with the CSA they may contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Commonwealth Ombudsman can consider and investigate complaints from people who believe they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably by an Australian Government Department or Agency.

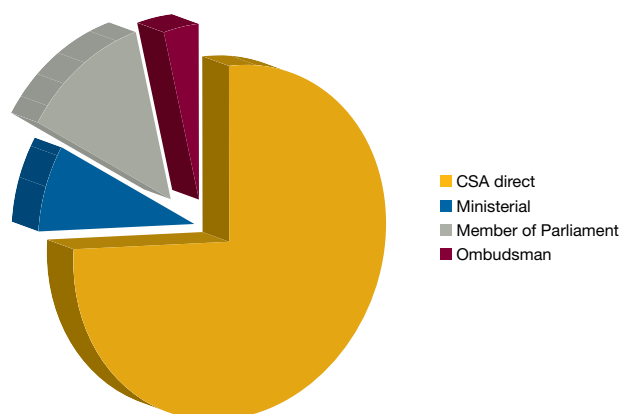
Table 7.3: Complaints received 2006-07 to 2008-09

	CSA direct	Ministerial	Member of Parliament	Ombudsman	Total
2006-07	7,056	736	1,143	216	9,151
2007-08	7,885	787	1,290	385	10,347
2008-09	9,536	1,102	1,663	573	12,874

Source: CSA, June 2009.

Key fact: *The number of complaints received increased in 2008-09. A majority of these were about decisions made by the CSA or the amount of child support.*

Chart 7.2: Avenue of complaints received in 2008-09



Source: CSA, June 2009

Table 7.3 and chart 7.2 above shows that there were a total of 12,874 complaints made about the CSA in 2008-09. A majority of these (9,536) were made directly to the CSA. Complaints were also received by the Minister for Human Services' Office, the Ombudsman and other MPs' Offices.

Table 7.4: Nature of step 3 complaints in 2008-09

Reason for complaint	Total number	(%)
Decision making	1,719	13
Outcome	543	4
Process	1,192	9
Inaction	1,533	12
Call documentation	41	1
Call return	380	3
Amount disputed	1,729	13
Affordability	1,092	8
Behaviour	1,187	9
Objectivity / bias	147	1
Information inconsistent	261	2
Information inadequate	375	3
Information inaccurate	632	5
Timeliness	716	6
Compliment	27	0
Letters, notes and statements	256	2
Service continuity	119	1
PIs application	35	1
Legislation and policy - application	317	2
Government policy/ inter agency effects	223	2
CS Scheme design and legislation	355	3
Total step 3 complaints finalised	12,874	100

Source: Child Support Agency, June 2009.

Table 7.4 shows that of the 12,874 complaints made 1,729 (13 per cent) related to the amount of the child support assessment and 1,719 (13 per cent) were about concerns about the decision making process.



8.0 Increased support for parents

8.1 CSA support products

Separation can be a difficult and confusing time. To help and support separated parents the CSA has produced a series of free booklets that parents 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-partner 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
- *My family is separating – what now?* — is a new online support product that assists families to find information relating to the emotional, financial and legal issues they may face during the separation process.

In addition to the *Me and My* books, the interactive ‘Dealing with Separation’ CD-ROM shares real customer experiences, tips and tools on how to deal with separation.

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

8.2 Online services

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

Since its launch in April 2006, over 96,000 customers and employers 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 the CSA of any change in the care arrangements for children
- advise the CSA of any changes to income and
- complete an enquiry form to get in touch with the CSA.

To enrol go to **www.csaonline.gov.au** or call **131 272**.

8.3 Legal Services Program overview

8.3.1 Background

The Child Support Scheme Legal Services Program is an 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 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 to interpret their child support obligations
- assisting with preparing and completing legal documents and
- 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 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.

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.

8.3.2 Community Legal Services Program statistics 2008–2009

During 2008-09 community legal centres recorded the following activities for child support matters:

Advice	4,794
Cases opened	1,260
Cases closed	1,209
Community legal education	13
Law reform and legal policy	1

Additional child support information collected by community legal services relating to child support activities for 2008-09:

Total clients with a child support concern / issue	3,150
Parent type	
Receiving (only)	1,321
Paying (only)	707
Both paying and receiving	124
Stages	
Pre-October 1989	475
Post-October 1989	2,643
Both pre and post October 1989	29
Number of matters requiring DNA testing	275
Number of matters involving applications for departures	51
Number of other applications for child support issues	86
Age of client	
Less than 18 years	12
18 – 34 years	696
35 – 49 years	1,116
Over 50 years	270
Income Scale	
\$26,000 or less per year	1,536
Between \$26,000 and \$52,000 per year	439
More than \$52,000 per year	76

8.4 Support services and contact details

The CSA understands that parents have different needs. Listed below are a variety of services available to assist parents with the support they need during and following their separation. Some of the services include the CSA, other government departments and support and legal service providers.

Alternatively, the CSA Community Service Directory provides information on service providers located across Australia. Details of services nearby in your area can be accessed on the CSA website **www.csa.gov.au** or by calling **131 272**. Call charges apply.

Child Support Agency

General enquiries.....	131 272
The CSA Info Service (IVR automated service for quick account enquiries and general information)	131 107
Child Support Change of Assessment (CoA).....	131 141
CSA complaints.....	132 919
Publications hotline.....	1800 040 972

www.csa.gov.au

Centrelink

Services

Appointments.....	131 021
Self-service.....	136 240
Customer relations (freecall).....	1800 050 004
Centrelink Multilingual Call	131 202
TTY (text phone, freecall)	1800 810 586
TTY Customer Relations (freecall)	1800 000 567

Programs

Employment services.....	132 850
Retirements services	132 300
Disability, sickness and carers.....	132 717
Youth and student services.....	132 490
ABSTUDY	132 317

www.centrelink.gov.au

Other government departments

Medicare 132 011
www.medicare.gov.au

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 1300 653 227
www.fahcsia.gov.au

Family Assistance Office 136 150
www.familyassist.gov.au

Department of Veterans' Affairs 133 254
www.dva.gov.au

Family Court

Family Court of Australia 1300 352 000
www.familycourt.gov.au

Family Court of Western Australia 08 9224 8222
www.familycourt.wa.gov.au

Other support services

Family Relationship Services

Family Relationship Centres **www.familyrelationships.gov.au**

Family Relationship Advice Line 1800 050 321

Centacare 1300 138 070

Australian Parenting and Relationship Line 1300 365 859

Relationships Australia 1300 364 277

Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS) 131 450

Lifeline 131 114

Mensline Australia 1300 789 978

Kids Helpline 1800 551 800

Financial counselling services are available in each state

ACT 02 6257 1788

WA 08 9221 9411

NSW 1800 808 488

NT 1800 898 500

Vic 1300 55 8181

Qld 07 3321 3192

Tas 1800 243 232

SA 08 8202 5180

Family Law

Federal Magistrates Court of Australia 1300 352 000
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

NSW 1800 451 784 toll Free
www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Vic..... 1800 677 402
www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

Tas 1300 366 611
www.legalaid.tas.gov.au

WA 1300 650 579
www.legalaid.wa.gov.au

NT 1800 019 343
www.ntlac.nt.gov.au

Qld 1300 651 188
www.legalaid.qld.gov.au

SA 1300 366 424
www.lsc.sa.gov.au

Note: *Call charges may apply for the above phone numbers. Please check with your service provider.

9.0 Glossary of terms

Cases ended with arrears	This refers to cases that have ended where the paying parent still has outstanding child support and over due penalties owing to the CSA and/or receiving parent.
Active cases	cases that are registered and have a current liability being collected.
Adjusted taxable income	The total of taxable income plus other income components: gross reportable fringe benefits total, target foreign income, net investment losses, reportable superannuation contributions and some tax-free pensions or benefits.
Change of Assessment (CoA)	If parents believe their child support assessment does not reflect their special circumstances, they may be able to apply for a change of assessment to reassess the amount of child support that is paid.
Child support agreement	A flexible way of arranging child support if both parents agree on how the children should be supported financially.
Child support assessment	An outline of how CSA calculated a parent's child support case using the formula. An example of what a child support assessment looks like can be viewed online.
Child support formula	Annual rates of child support are calculated according to a basic child support formula, or a variation of the formula.
Court-registered agreement	An agreement between parents that is registered with the court.
CSA collect	CSA collects the payment from the paying parent(s) and transfers it to the receiving parent or non-parent carer.
Estimate of income	An estimate of what the receiving parent or paying parent's income details will be, from the date of making the estimate until the end of a child support period.
Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A	A government payment designed to help support families with children.
Minimum assessment	Paying parents who receive income support may be required to pay a minimum amount per week for each child support family, capped at three times that amount.
Paying parent	The parent, either natural or adoptive, who pays child support.
Private collect	CSA-registered child support that is collected privately, i.e. paid directly from the paying parent to receiving parent or non-parent carer (not through CSA).
Receiving parent	The person who is eligible to receive child support and is responsible for the ongoing care of the child/children.
Taxable income	The income that appears on a parent's tax assessment from the Australian Taxation Office after lodging a tax return.
Variation	A variation to a child support assessment due to a change in circumstances, for example a change in income, change in level of care or an additional child.
Self-administration	a private arrangement between parents, including cases where child support is not sought.
International case	The CSA is able to administer child support where one parent lives overseas and the other parent lives in Australia in some cases. This is known as an international case.
Domestic case	A domestic case is where both parents reside in Australia.
Total Child Support Debt (TCSD)	Total Child Support Debt (TCSD) is the total amount of overdue money that is payable by one child support customer to another.
Write-Off amounts	Debt deemed to be currently uncollectible