

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

Committee inquiry: Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources

Date Held: 1 March 2018

Question Taken on Notice – APVMA Response 1

Ms KEAY: I want to just expand on that a little bit because, in relation to hitting the target for assessments leading up to, I think, the September 2016 quarter, we've received some evidence that it was quite strong. You were getting about 80 per cent plus. Then there seems to be, after that quarter, huge decline down to last year. Why would that be the case?

Dr Parker: From memory, I think what you're highlighting is in one class of the applications that we do, which is pesticides for that quarter. I'm happy to find the exact figures, but I'm pretty sure I know the figures. That's in one class of our applications.

Answer:

The table below gives the percentage of applications completed within the statutory timeframes for the period June 2015 – December 2017.

	Percentage of applications completed within timeframe									
Quarter	Sep 15	Dec 15	Mar 16	Jun 16	Sep16	Dec16	Mar 17	Jun 17	Sep 17	Dec 17
Pesticides	55	49	50	72	82	50	30	24	36	72
Vet Meds	78	81	74	85	84	87	24	75	76	71
Permits	82	48	74	75	68	88	58	93	82	80
Actives	62	68	81	71	69	83	95	71	52	76
Total	64	64	64	76	77	78	62	58	58	74

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Question Taken on Notice – APVMA Response 2

So there were some staff that had left the organisation over that time?

Dr Parker: There would have been staff. I'd have to get the numbers for you. I don't have them to hand. One of my colleagues may well do.

Ms KEAY: Can you take that on notice.

Dr Parker: Certainly. I'm very happy to do so.

Mr FITZGIBBON: Can I just intervene on that point, Mr Chairman.

Dr Parker: Sorry, can I just clarify: for the question on notice, exactly what time frame are you after? Then we can provide it. Are we looking for June 2016?

Ms KEAY: In the September quarter, it reached 83 per cent. Now you're saying in March it went down 42 per cent—

Dr Parker: That's correct.

Ms KEAY: until picking up, I think you said, in December 2017.

Dr Parker: December of this quarter, yes.

Ms KEAY: So over those 18 months from September.

Dr Parker: Certainly, we're very happy to provide you with the total staff on and off in that period, yes.

Ms KEAY: Thank you.

Answer:

For the period 1 September 2016 to 28 February 2018, 109 staff departed and 123 commenced with the organisation.

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Question Taken on Notice – APVMA Response 3

Ms MARINO: So without the stop the clock, how much time do you have for that process?

Dr Parker: Again, it would depend on the class, and I don't have the full list of classes here. But I can provide that to the committee on notice. It will have the class of application and the time frame associated with—

Answer:

The timeframes for the different application types that the APVMA assesses are set by Schedules 6 and 7 of the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Regulations 1995*. These are described in tables 1 and 2 in the following link apvma.gov.au/node/599.

If the APVMA gives a notice to the applicant under section 159 of the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994*, the timeframe is extended as outlined in the link provided.

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Question Taken on Notice – APVMA Response 4

CHAIR: You've had a fair go. Justine had—

Mr FITZGIBBON: I'm still on the staffing numbers. I just want to clarify. It went from 182 to 204. I would say that is rapid growth. You lost a lot of staff. You acknowledge that. Do you want to tell us how many you lost?

Dr Parker: I've undertaken to give that figure. I don't have the exact figure with the time frame.

Answer:

For the period 1 September 2016 to 28 February 2018, 109 staff departed and 123 commenced with the organisation.

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Question Taken on Notice – APVMA Response 5

Mr KEOGH: I understand, so it doesn't affect their super or anything like that?

Dr Parker: No, it's a simple cash bonus if you like.

Mr KEOGH: And what's the average APS in the agency?

Dr Parker: The ASL?

Mr KEOGH: Is the average a level 4 or level 5?

Dr Parker: I don't know. We'll provide that to you. I don't have that.

Mr KEOGH: And the average salary?

Dr Parker: Correct.

Answer:

The average salary of our staff is \$97,772.

The APVMA is not able to provide an average APS classification – the most appropriate comparator is the mid-point (median) classification of our staff (that is that there are equal numbers of staff below and above this classification level). The median classification is APS 6.5.

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Question Taken on Notice – APVMA Response 6

Mr FITZGIBBON: That's pleasantly surprising: 240 of them were regulatory scientists. It looks like your supply of regulatory scientists is stronger than some might think.

Dr Parker: I think I made that point before. I think one of the advantages of being such a public organisation at the moment is that everyone knows who we are and what we do. I was really encouraged by the large number of people who applied for that bulk round. We've employed a number of people from that. We made a merit list and we employed a number of them off that.

Mr FITZGIBBON: How many?

Dr Parker: I believe we've employed 12, but I'd have to double-check the number.

Answer:

16 new regulatory scientists were engaged from the May 2017 bulk regulatory scientist recruitment round.