

Commissioner opening statement – Budget Senate Estimates – October 2022

I expect this will be the final appearance for the ABCC before the Committee for both myself and my leadership team. I take this final opportunity to thank all members of the Committee for their interest in the important work undertaken by the ABCC.

The past 5 months have been a very difficult time for our staff. Despite being ongoing Commonwealth public servants, they have faced significant uncertainty as to their continuing employment in the APS.

I am acutely aware of the personal toll on them. My staff have demonstrated the resilience and professionalism that I have come to expect from them.

I acknowledge and express my appreciation to the heads of Commonwealth agencies who have reached out to me during this time to consider and identify suitable staff for transfer to their Agencies.

Five APS agencies presented to ABCC staff on current and future vacancies and accepted the CVs of staff interested in applying or transferring to new roles. My thanks go to those agencies, in particular the Fair Work Ombudsman, the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity; the Australian Skills Quality Authority; the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

I acknowledge the Fair Work Ombudsman who will ultimately take onboard 16 of our staff as part of the transfer of function to the FWO. This includes our graduate cohort who otherwise had no entitlement to the redundancy provisions available to ongoing ABCC staff.

I also acknowledge the engagement and understanding of the Secretary and her staff from the Department for Employment and Workplace Relations. They have assisted us in placing some of our most vulnerable staff. The Department has

ensured that staff on paid parental leave had a clear pathway to ongoing employment by way of transfer to ongoing positions within the Department.

All of these engagements have to date facilitated the retention of highly skilled ABCC staff within the APS and ensured their wealth of knowledge and expertise is not lost to the APS.

I don't have anything further for my opening statement but I can address the Committee in due course on the current state of the ABCC's operations and the important transfer of function to the Fair Work Ombudsman that will be fully implemented on and from Thursday 12 November.

Thank you, Chair.