

Inquiry into the current capability of the APS

Questions on Notice – DVA - CPSU QONS

- 1. On notice, would you be able to provide an outline to the committee- a few paragraphs- setting out the union's arguments in terms of the impact* on staff?**

*In reference to labour hire arrangements.

CHAIR: I appreciate there's quite some complexity. While there are APS levels, there are increments in between and it is difficult to go to these issues of equity and cost. On notice, would you be able to provide an outline to the committee—a few paragraphs—setting out the union's arguments in terms of the impact on staff? It seems to me that there are four areas of consideration that these submissions give rise to in terms of capability: the impact on staff; the cost to the department—and we'll come to that with the department in due course; the impact on service levels; and issues of culture—that is, how working together is managed in this environment. I want to come to that last issue. What impact does it have on the working environment, collegiality and the functionality of management to have what is very generously called a blended workforce model? What impact does that have on the culture of the Department of Veterans' Affairs?

Response:

People engaged through labour hire take their work seriously and do the best they can but the majority of them want an ongoing APS job with the Department. There is a genuine attempt to not make them feel like a separate group. For all intents and purposes labour hire staff are dealt with and managed with in much the same fashion as permanent staff within the workplace. However, the nature of their employment relationship means that there are differences. Examples are:

Performance management: APS performance management arrangements do not apply to APS staff, who have the opportunity to talk through performance issues with their manager and undertake remedial work to address those issues. Labour hire staff can be let go at any time.

Leave and flexible working arrangements: Labour hire staff do not have access to flexible working arrangements or paid leave, and this places a considerable burden on them individually. It means that people come to work when they are sick. They don't get paid during any periods of leave, and many

Career advancement & salary: Contracts are generally between 3 and 12 months, and staff don't get much notice if their contract will be renewed and can be let go at any time. They don't get the same access to career development opportunities. Labour hire staff don't have access to salary increments or career progression.

Inferior superannuation arrangements: Public Sector superannuation is set at 15.4%. Labour hire staff receive the amount set by the superannuation guarantee.

Culturally, it is the view of both APS and labour hire staff that not staffing with ongoing public staff means undermines what is a very serious job that requires deep skills that are built up over time.

2. Would you be able to provide on notice the number of DVA staff who are CPSU members?

455

3. Do you have numbers as to how many members were involved in each of those surveys? You may not be able to provide them now. It might be on notice.

Survey respondents in Compensation Claims Teams

The survey was sent out to both CPSU members and non-members. Recipients of the survey voluntarily responded. The survey was open for four weeks, 83 survey responses received from approximately 190 people working in this area.

Survey respondents in Complex Case Managers

The survey was sent out to both CPSU members and non-members. Recipients of the survey voluntarily responded. The survey was open for two weeks, 44 survey responses were received from about 100 staff.