

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES – 21 OCTOBER 2010 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Tasmanian Transport Programs – Field Assessor Training

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Senator: Abetz

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Question:

Senator ABETZ - Can you tell us what training the Tasmanian programs field assessors undergo before they go out making assessments?

Mr Maloney - I would probably take on notice the detail of that training, if you like, and we can cover off the modules. It is quite extensive and covers a number of periods and some active on-the-ground work with more experienced assessors. But, if you like, I will take that on notice and get back to you.

Answer:

Centrelink employees who are involved in delivering the Tasmanian Transport Programs (TTP) services on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport undertake training that involves two initial components:

- an induction to Centrelink as part of the national induction program; and
- an internal TTP training component supported by on-the-job coaching and mentoring.

Overview of Training

The Centrelink Induction Program has been developed to ensure all inductees within Centrelink receive consistent national information that is up-to-date and relevant, with opportunities for local tailoring where necessary for 'boutique business' lines such as the TTP. Centrelink National Induction training includes:

- day one essentials and introduction to Centrelink;
- privacy and security;
- introduction to job role and location;
- introduction to labour market and the community; and
- introduction to office.

Following National Induction, TTP assessors begin a training program facilitated by the TTP Senior Practitioner, covering the following topics:

- introduction to the TTP and the various schemes – ie the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme, Bass Strait Passenger Vehicle Equalisation Scheme and the Tasmanian Wheat Freight Scheme;
- introduction to TTP administration;
- policy guidelines and Ministerial Directions;
- commodity code guidelines;
- privacy and commercial-in-confidence;
- TTP IT systems;
- TTP's Resource Guide;
- northbound claims – covering issues related to standard commodities, products, invoices, claim notes, refrigeration/dry, pallets, imports/exports, conversions both standard and non-standard, stowage factors, manual calculations etc;
- key performance indicators;
- letters and forms, and positional mailboxes;
- southbound claims - P Scheme for Primary Producers, M scheme for Manufacturers and Miners, B Scheme for Bakeries;
- business registration - eligibility, registration and supporting documentation;
- introduction to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification;
- special categories for Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme – including sportspersons and professional entertainers, and horses;
- self-assessment process for approved Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme claimants; and
- Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme agents' arrangements.

Following this training, assessors are initially exposed to processing less complex customer claims. During this process, 100 per cent of the trainee's work is checked for quality assurance. Quality assurance checking is carried out by experienced senior officers who have regard to all matters relating to the assessment, and is an expert's check on all the relevant factors in relation to that claim.

The process of checking 100 per cent of the trainee's work is extensive and continues for approximately three to six months, at which time a formal assessment of accuracy is conducted. If the trainee meets the required standard of proficiency and accuracy of claims processing, the level of work checked is reduced. From that point, the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme IT system randomly selects 10 per cent of the claims approved for quality assurance checking. This level of checking is ongoing.

To ensure all aspects of training have been covered during the initial stages, a thorough evaluation is conducted in consultation with the trainee, trainer and the Team Leader. At this stage a checklist is completed to ensure that all aspects have been covered and signed off by all parties. This checklist is placed individually on the assessor's personal file.

Upon completion of the initial TTP training component, the assessor participates in a more informal component where they are assigned to a 'coach' who works with them on an individual basis, providing support and guidance while the trainee begins to work more independently.

Over the course of their employment, assessors also participate in a range of developmental and learning opportunities, for example related to communication, customer service and conflict resolution. These courses are accessed through Centrelink's learning portal and are facilitated through formal training or as an e-learning package.

Access to Information

The TTP assessors have access to a resource guide containing information relevant to performing their duties. The contents of the guide includes:

- task cards, such as:
 - o manufacturing and mining business registration;
 - o Furneaux Group additional assistance;
 - o payment procedures; and
 - o exports and returns;
- letters;
- internal policy decisions;
- policy decisions from the policy department (Department of Infrastructure and Transport);
- a suite of calculators;
- references to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification; and
- references to the Ministerial Guidelines and the Ministerial Directions.

TTP employees are provided with training to effectively use the guide and utilise the information to assist them in making decisions. During induction, and throughout training, employees are directed to the guide to support their learning and increase their understanding of the scheme. The resource guide is intended to support accurate decision making and to ensure consistency in customer service delivery.

IT Training

IT training is a substantial component of the TTP training program and covers basic Centrelink systems, Microsoft and Lotus Notes, as well as the following more specific systems for TTP:

- Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme Bulk Upload System;
- registration and access management for business registration (technical);
- Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme Portal (for electronic lodgements); and
- e-Reference, Centrelink's reference tool for employees.