

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2015**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Department of Communications and the Arts**

**Question No: 12**

**Program 1.1**

**Hansard Ref: Page 62, 20/10/2015**

**Topic: BCR – Workers Compensation**

**Senator McAllister, Jenny asked:**

**Senator McALLISTER:** I think I understand. How are we tracking in terms of stress, sick leave and injury in your unit, Dr Paterson? Because that of course also connects strongly to morale. How many of your staff have been on workers compensation in the last 12-month period?

**Dr Paterson:** I would need to take that on notice.

**Senator McALLISTER:** How many staff have asked to transfer from your unit on the basis of stress?

**Dr Paterson:** Again I would need to take on notice how many staff have transferred. As to whether they have done that on the basis of stress, I will not necessarily know that, of course.

**Senator McALLISTER:** When you do that and prepare your material for us, it would be useful if you could examine both staff and contractors and whether there are contractors who have terminated their contracts or resigned. Has the department's human resource branch been involved in discussions around stress and workload with the team in your area, Dr Paterson?

**Ms O'Loughlin:** Across the department, our people area is very supportive of management in dealing with issues such as where people are feeling that they are overly stressed. So we do have a strong engagement with our people branch in those areas.

**Senator McALLISTER:** That is good to hear. But I wonder how it is going in the Bureau of Communications Research.

**Ms O'Loughlin:** Again, we can take that on notice, but generally we did have a number of particular staff who had concerns about, specifically, their placements post-restructure. My people branch worked very hard on a one-to-one basis with those people to resolve those issues. We can take on notice the statistics as part of that for the bureau.

**Answer:**

1. There have been three accepted workers compensation claims from staff in the Bureau of Communications Research in the past 12 months.
2. There have been no formal requests from staff to be transferred out of the Bureau due to stress.
3. In the past 12 months, the Bureau has had seven contractors employed with five contracts being terminated on the scheduled date of expiry and two currently active.