

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

26 February 2014

Question: AET 1775-1779

Topic: Public Debt Interest (PC)

Written: 7 March 2014

Senator BUSHBY asked:

According to MYEFO the net interest payments for debt held by the General Government Sector for the current financial year total \$8.8 billion, while the total interest cost is \$12.4 billion. Both figures rise to be \$12.8 billion and \$16.7 billion respectively in the final out-year.

1775. What would the Government be able to do with the equivalent amount of money in this portfolio if these billions were spent on programs and outcomes instead of on debt ?
1776. Does your agency ever observe connection between performance management of staff and claims of stress leave or other forms of sick leave?
1777. What is the number of staff on stress leave or psychological injury claims at any one time in your agency? How many harassment claims are there at any one time? How many of these cases are connected to performance cases? Have you observed any instances of stress claims and harassment claims being a tactic used by staff which the agency tries to performance-manage?
1778. Looking at the length of time claimed for sick leave, are you seeing longer absences for people with physical injuries or people claiming to have psychological injuries? What's the degree of difference?
1779. How much would be saved from your workforce insurance costs if you did not have the current levels of stress-related claims and other psychological injury claims?

Answer:

1775. Please refer to the Treasury response to AET 1705.
1776. The Commission has not collected data on stress as a reason for absence from work, and is not aware of any staff taking sick leave where they advised stress as a result of performance management as a reason for absence.
1777. As at 7 March 2014, there are no current psychological injury claims or staff on leave primarily as a consequence of work-related stress. As at 7 March 2014, there are no current harassment claims. There have been relatively few past instances of psychological injury claims or harassment claims. No instances have been observed of stress claims and harassment claims being used as a tactic by staff in a performance management context.
1778. The Commission has insufficient cases to discern a trend.
1779. The Commission does not have a history of psychological injury claims. The Commission's workers insurance premium for 2012-13 was 0.08 per cent of payroll, compared to 1.77 per cent for all agencies combined.