

## Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

#### Outcome 1 - Employment

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000083

Senator Cameron asked on 11 February 2016 on proof Hansard page 64

#### Question

#### Work for the Dole - dropout rate

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Senator CAMERON: We have had a bit of a discussion about the dropout rate before completion. Has there been any initiative that the government has taken to reduce dropout?

Mr Hehir: There are things that the government has looked at in terms of the dropout rate.

Senator CAMERON: I do not want to know what they have looked at. I want to know what they have done.

Mr Hehir: There is currently legislation before the parliament which seeks to impose a similar obligation on work-for-the-dole attendance as it does for provider attendance.

Senator CAMERON: More penal provisions?

CHAIR: Senator Cameron!

Mr Hehir: It is a measure designed to encourage attendance.

Senator CAMERON: You are so uptight, Chair.

CHAIR: I am not uptight. I just do not like you verballing the officials.

Mr Hehir: It applies the same approach to a work-for-the-dole activity as it does to a provider activity.

Senator CAMERON: There will be a penalty?

Mr Hehir: It is a consistency measure.

Senator CAMERON: There is a penal provision.

Mr Hehir: I think the first step is a suspension of payment and not a penalty as such. We need to check what the second phase is.

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Ms Leon: The other work that especially our state network and our contract managers do with all the providers is to help them better understand how to prepare people for, and keep them attending, Work for the Dole. As part of our contract management, we are constantly liaising with the employment service providers to ensure that we have given them updated information and best practice advice about what to do to increase job seeker attendance. That work is going on all the time to try and ensure that the program works as effectively as possible. The main contact the job seekers have is with their provider, so we are making sure the providers are fully up to date with their responsibilities, with the best ways they can motivate people and with the most effective ways we can interact with job seekers through them.

Senator CAMERON: I think you have taken on notice to give us some details on the dropout rates.

Mr Hehir: Yes.

Ms Leon: And of course not all the dropouts are dropping out for the wrong reasons.

Sometimes, as Mr Hehir has said, it is because people have moved into training or into

employment or into another Work for the Dole activity.

Senator CAMERON: I think you have taken it on notice to give us a break down on that.

Ms Leon: That is right.

**Answer**

Refer to EMSQ16-000080 for information on job seekers that exited Work for the Dole activities.