

## **Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment**

### **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017**

#### **Outcome 1 - Employment**

**Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-003969**

**Senator Marshall provided in writing.**

#### **Question**

##### **Work for the Dole - WHS practices**

Since the report (but also as a part of ongoing management and assurance practices) the Department has: written to all providers in August 2016 giving them results of the Ernst and Young onsite audits; held WHS discussions with providers; explained the internal processes for monitoring and investigating incidents. Has the Department actually changed practices in how it manages work health and safety outcomes within the Work for the Dole program specifically because of what was in the report? What practices? How? Have any of those “internal processes” actually changed, or just reiterated?

#### **Answer**

Work health and safety remains a continuing area of focus for the Department, including through ongoing program assurance activities to ensure that work health and safety requirements are met.

The Department made changes to the Work for the Dole Guideline to specifically address findings from the Ernst & Young on-site audits. These changes include:

- expansion of the examples of hazards and risks to consider as part of the risk assessment process
- clarification of the requirement for lead providers to monitor, review and, where necessary, update the risk assessment (Place) and to notify other relevant providers of activity changes to ensure participant suitability and safety
- further emphasis on the requirement to provide continuous supervision throughout the activity where it involves vulnerable people, and
- confirmation of the requirement to ensure that the Host Organisation has implemented the risk assessment (Place) in full, including implementation of identified work health and safety controls.

The Guideline also reinforces that where a risk assessment (Place) identifies significant work health and safety concerns that cannot be mitigated and/or cannot be adequately managed, it must not be considered a suitable Work for the Dole Place.

Ernst & Young was engaged to deliver 10 technical work health and safety workshops in 2016 to educate the Department’s contract management staff in the identification of work health and safety hazards and risk assessment methodologies and principles to apply when monitoring work health and safety.

The Department has also strengthened its internal protocol in relation to reporting, escalation, management and monitoring of incidents. Information sessions have been conducted for account and contract management staff to ensure that they are familiar with and can apply the protocol.

Further on-site work health and safety audits are being undertaken and the Department will continue other program assurance activities focused on work health and safety requirements in Work for the Dole.