

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017

Outcome 1 - Employment

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-003970

Senator Marshall provided in writing.

Question

Work for the Dole - consultation with providers regarding WHS practices

"Has the Department started consulting with all other providers about specific findings of the report? Department said they just contacted CEO's of state-based providers to again remind "all providers about the importance of work health and safety requirements." Has there been discussion or direction around the specific findings of the report?

Since the report was completed, has the Turnbull Government issued a direction to the Department that they should consult with all providers covering the findings of the report? How many other providers have been instructed to improve work health and safety in their Work for the Dole program since the report was completed? "

Answer

The Department wrote to all jobactive providers and Work for the Dole Coordinators (Coordinators), irrespective of whether they were subject to the Ernst & Young audits, to outline the audit findings.

The letter identified specific areas for attention by all jobactive providers and Coordinators including the need for:

- comprehensive risk assessments and for these to be updated to take account of any changes to the activity
- electrical equipment to be appropriately tested and tagged
- current registers and Safety Data Sheets for hazardous chemicals to be in place and maintained
- emergency drills and procedures to be in place and maintained
- vehicles and motorised equipment to be registered and well maintained
- appropriate training and personal protective equipment to be provided, where required
- job seekers to be aware of incident reporting requirements and escalation processes, and
- appropriate supervision of job seekers.

The letter also required all jobactive providers and Coordinators to provide written responses to the Department about how they ensure they meet the Competent Person requirement and that they maintain records of Competent Persons including their qualifications, training or experience.

Following distribution of the letter, the audit findings were reinforced in meetings held by the Department with each jobactive provider and Coordinator. Those discussions also covered overarching work health and safety responsibilities, including the importance of job seeker safety and ensuring there is a safe system of work in place at all times, and ensuring work health and safety requirements are met in accordance with the Work for the Dole program requirements and relevant State and Territory work health and safety legislation.