

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2014-2015

Agency - Comcare

Department of Employment Question No. EM0142_15

Senator Ludwig provided in writing.

Question

Comcare - Commission reports

1. Since Additional Estimates in February, 2014, how many Reports (including paid external advice) have been commissioned by the Minister, department or agency? Please provide details of each report including date commissioned, date report handed to Government, date of public release, Terms of Reference and Committee members.
2. How much did each report cost/or is estimated to cost? How many departmental or external staff were involved in each report and at what level? What is the current status of each report? When is the Government intending to respond to these reports?

Answer

Comcare has commissioned two reports since Additional Estimates in February 2014.

A report was commissioned from Taylor Fry, consulting actuaries, for the of Employment, to provide advice on costings on the impact of proposed *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act) changes. The report was commissioned on 7 May 2014 and was provided to Comcare on 22 May 2014. The total cost of the report was \$39,258. The report is not intended for public release.

The *Good Work through Effective Design* report was commissioned by Comcare from Professor Sharon K Parker University of Western Australia and Professor Mark Griffin, Psychology Department University Western Australia. The report was commissioned on 31 March 2014 and is anticipated to be handed to Government on 28 August 2014. The report will be released following Safe Work Australia members consultation, December 2014

Terms of Reference: The project will deliver on the Australian Work Health and Safety (WHS) Strategy 2012-2022 action area of *Healthy and Safe by Design* with a outcome that work, work processes and systems of work are designed and managed to eliminate or minimise hazards and risks.

The goals of the project are:

- "Use existing knowledge to produce a report summarising the empirical evidence that identifies the core concepts of healthy and safe work (physical, biomechanical, psychological). Examples of hazards include: Physical: noise,

temperature, radiation, chemicals; biomechanical, eg hazardous manual tasks, push, pull, lift, carry; Psychosocial, demand, control, role clarity, relationships (conflict), support, change.

- Use existing knowledge to produce a report summarising the empirical evidence that identifies the best practice approaches to effectively design work to be healthy and safe”.
- The contract notes a formal literature review is not required, but rather a collation of existing evidence into a synopsis. In addition, the ultimate goal of the project is to identify principles to guide work design, thus draft principles are also included in this report.

Committee members: The cross sectorial working group is Comcare, Safe Work Australia, WorkSafe Queensland. A broader reference group consists of representatives from Safe Work Australia Members.

The total contract for service is for \$58,000 exl GST. Comcare has an EL1 on the Working Group and oversight at Director (EL2) level. Milestone 1 - Submission of draft report synthesising the evidence. Comcare will use test the principles with scheme employers and develop supporting case studies in 2014-15.