

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Agency - Fair Work Building and Construction

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000292

Senator Cameron asked on 22 October 2015 on proof Hansard page 95

Question

FWBC - Sick leave and unscheduled absences

Senator CAMERON: I want to go to sick leave and unscheduled absences. Why has the rate of sick leave and unscheduled absences per employee nearly doubled since you assumed the position of director?

Mr Hadgkiss: Again, I will take that on notice. It is probably because of the shift in the strategy of the organisation into what I call the core business of coercion, discrimination and freedom of association and away from traditional wages and entitlements. So there is a greater exposure, certainly by our investigators, to building sites, where they are victims of fairly abhorrent instances, which you would be aware of.

Senator CAMERON: I do not want unsubstantiated hyperbole.

Mr Hadgkiss: No, these are facts.

Senator CAMERON: I do not want unsubstantiated hyperbole, because we know—

CHAIR: None of us do, Senator.

Mr Hadgkiss: I can give you facts—

Senator CAMERON: We know that you have got a record of this.

Mr Hadgkiss: I have a record of the number of cases of assaults on our members. We have had 12 instances of verbal abuse, intimidation; three cases of assault since—

Senator CAMERON: Are these allegations?

Mr Hadgkiss: No. Four are matters that have been reported to police. I can go on about matters before the court involving union officials, the royal commission evidence provided, and so on and so forth. So, going back to your question, I would suggest that the increase is owing to the environment in which our investigators find themselves on Barangaroo and other sites.

Senator CAMERON: Can you then provide me details of the sick leave and unscheduled absences for your investigators who are out on the sites and for your staff who are not on the sites.

Mr Hadgkiss: Yes.

Senator CAMERON: Can that be broken down in that way?

Mr Hadgkiss: I will take that on notice.

Senator CAMERON: I am just asking: can it be broken down?

Mr Hadgkiss: I will take that on notice.

Answer

Unscheduled absence is a measure of the working days lost due to sick leave, workers' compensation, carers' leave, miscellaneous leave and unauthorised leave without pay. The information is expressed as the average number of days of unscheduled absence per employee.

In 2013–2014, the average number of days of unscheduled absence per employee was 17.69 days.

In 2014–2015, the average number of days of unscheduled absence per employee was 17.87 days.

The agency does not break-down unscheduled absence data by type of job or job role.

Please note that in this period, the agency has two employees on long term workers compensation leave and five employees on long term approved personal leave.