

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Additional Estimates Hearing—February 2016

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: PSS (PSL3) employment model

Question: 182 – updated

Written: Senator Bernardi

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 1 April 2016

I asked about the PSS roster (Question on Notice 67, October 2015 Estimates) and DPS' answer was:

“...a new Master Roster will be developed during Qtr 4 2015. This is currently the subject of consultation with the WCC and then will be consulted with all staff over 28 days as per the Enterprise Agreement. A new point roster will be created.”

1. Was the roster finalised by the end of Q4 of 2015?
 - a. If not, when is it expected to be completed? If so, on what date was it finalised?

Mr Barnes indicated on 8 February 2016 that, with regard to the PSL3 positions:

“Applications have been received. Applications have closed, and the process is at the point of short-listing but that process of short-listing for those positions has not yet been completed.”

2. Please provide a timeline of the contact that DPS or PSS has had with the applicants, from the notification of applications being open, to the most recent communication with applicants. Please provide dates for all communication.

Finances and costings

3. What input has the DPS Finance section had in costing this new PSS employment model?
4. What were the costings that DPS Finance came up with regarding the model and staffing changes?
5. Did any other financial advisers have input into costing the new model? If so, please provide details.
6. Have senior DPS management received any concerns from PSS staff about the funding of the PSL3 model?
7. If so, what were those concerns, what inquiries were made by management into those concerns, and what was the response to those inquiries?

Training curriculum

DPS's answer to Question on Notice 67 (October 2015 Estimates) was:

“The curriculum is currently in the development phase for the PSL 3 positions...”

8. Has the curriculum been finalised?
 - a. If so, on what date was it finalised? Can you provide me with a copy of the curriculum? If not, on what date is it due to be finalised?
9. Have there been any delays in developing the curriculum?

PH threat level

In DPS' answer (part 1 of QoN 66), the Department said that the motivation behind the new employment model was that:

“The current PSS staffing and roster structure did not fit the operational requirements for the building.”

10. What are the current 'operation requirements' for Parliament House?
11. What is the current threat level of the actual building of Parliament House?
12. When the country's threat level was raised, did the threat level for Parliament House change? If so, on what date did it change?

Consultation

In DPS' answer (part 5 of QoN 66), the Department said that the following branches/groups were consulted about the new employment model: Human Resources, the PSS Workplace Consultative Committee and the CPSU and its PSS Delegate.

13. Was the DPS Finance section consulted?

- a. If not, why not? If so, on what date/s were they consulted?

Part-timers

The DPS table of the different staff levels (part 11 of QoN 67) states that there are no part-time staff.

14. Are there currently no part-time staff at all working within PSS?
15. Within the new employment model, what would the arrangements be for any part-time staff?
16. Would part-time staff be rostered on during non-sitting weeks?

CMT

17. Does the current Competency Maintenance Training (CMT) involve training in the use of handcuffs (plastic zip ties) and batons?
 - a. If so, do all current PSS officers who undertake CMT train with batons and these handcuffs? Why?
18. If the AFP do armed patrols within Parliament House, will PSS officers be required to carry weapons?
19. Are any legislative changes required to allow PSS officers to carry weapons within the building?

Answer

Master Roster

1. No. See response to Question on Notice No. 162.
2. 8 October 2015: PSL 3 role was advertised on APSJobs with additional advertising undertaken on Seek and Career One.

2 December 2015: all applicants were provided with an update regarding the process.

19 February 2016: all applicants for the role were advised via email that the PSL 3 process would not proceed.

Finance and Costings

3. DPS finance modelled the budgetary impact of the proposed additional PSS staff as part of the 2015–16 DPS Mid-Year Review in December.
4. The cost of the new proposed PSS structure including the additional PSL 3s was \$18.2 million in 2016–17, whereas the budget for the old structure was \$15.2 million. The new model if it proceeded would cost the department an additional \$3.0 million.
5. No.
6. Questions were asked in the context of Enterprise Bargaining about whether any savings from the change to the PSS model would contribute to the pay rise. The answer given was “no” as there were no savings.
7. See response to question 6.

Training Curriculum

8. The PSL3 curriculum was not finalised due to the cancellation of the recent PSL3 recruitment process and the redirection of priorities to the recruitment and training of new PSL1/2s. It would take three to four weeks to finalise the curriculum, should a decision be taken to implement the PSL3 positions.
9. See response to question 8.

PH threat level

10. PSS provides the internal operational security overlay for the building in cooperation and with the agreement of the AFP Parliament House Security Controller.

This includes:

- resourcing at security screening points;
 - staffing of entry and exit points;
 - staffing of entry and exit points to the private areas;
 - chamber security;
 - staffing of the Parliament House Security Operations Room;
 - undertaking foot patrols within the building;
 - car parking, including foot patrols, issuing of infringement notices and staffing at entry points during Parliamentary sitting periods; and
 - major events, functions, hearings or committee meetings where additional numbers would be required depending on the type and style of event being held/undertaken.
11. Current Threat Level for Parliament House is “Possible”.
12. No.

Consultation

13. Yes, DPS Finance was consulted on 7 December 2015 regarding the budgetary impacts of the new model as part of the 2015–16 financial Mid-Year Review.

Part-timers

14. There are part-time staff working in the PSS. They are designated as “sessional” staff.
15. Sessional staff are employed and must be available to work when Parliament is sitting and for mandatory competency training.
16. Sessional staff can be offered additional hours or shifts at management discretion and with the agreement of the employee.

CMT

17. Following discussions with AFP personnel a handcuffing change-over technique has been developed to facilitate situations where the transfer of custody of a subject under restraint is required from PSS personnel to AFP and AFP require the subject to be handcuffed.

This technique is now being incorporated into a number of different scenarios where the transfer of custody to AFP may arise. This technique does not include the use of flexi cuffs. All PSS staff are trained in the use of flexi cuffs for the restraint of offenders specifically in the House of Representative and Senate galleries. The use of restraints would only occur where:

- the offender's behaviour requires restraining, and
- permission is obtained from Black Rod or Sergeant at Arms to use restraints.

During defensive tactics training, a padded plastic training aid is used as a prop to simulate a hand held metal detector. This prop could be referred to as a ‘baton’. The use of this training aid could be confused with offensive baton training, however offensive baton training is not taught in CMT.

18. No.
19. Legal advice suggests that legislative change would be required before PSS Officers could be issued with weapons.