

**SENATE EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION
LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

**2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING
19 FEBRUARY 2004**

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Outcome: Agencies

Question Number: W329-04

Question:

Senator Harradine asked in writing:

Have any external or independent reviews of Comcare performance and/or client satisfaction been carried out in the past five years? Please provide details of such reviews and the findings of these reviews. Please provide full copies of the results of such reviews conducted in the last two years. Were any gaps identified in the delivery of Comcare services to injured workers? What were these gaps and how is the Department addressing them?

Answer:

Comcare periodically conducts reviews of premium paying agency and claimant satisfaction with service. These reviews (typically conducted as surveys by contracted social research consultants) complement Comcare's internal audit program and feedback received as compliments, complaints and formal representations, or via Comcare's account management staff.

Premium paying agency satisfaction

Comcare's most recent formal review of premium paying agency satisfaction was conducted in 2001 by Colmar Brunton Social Research. This research established a benchmark measure of premium paying agency satisfaction and loyalty levels in relation to Comcare's claims management services. It also identified the key drivers of satisfaction with the purpose of prioritising actions for customer loyalty and satisfaction initiatives.

Respondents to the survey were agency staff with strategic and/or operational responsibility for workers' compensation and injury management issues. Respondents represented a cross-section of agencies and job roles and had varying levels of involvement in workers' compensation and injury management issues.

This research found that, at that time, the majority of premium paying agencies were satisfied with Comcare's claims management services and that satisfaction could be improved by enhancing staff relationship management skills, especially "soft" skills like accessibility, cooperativeness, and timeframes for responding to issues. These

learning and development needs have been incorporated into individual and workgroup performance management and development strategies.

Comcare is planning to conduct a survey of premium paying agency satisfaction in the later part of 2004.

Claimant satisfaction

Since 2001 Comcare has surveyed claimant satisfaction via the 'Return to Work Monitor' – a national survey conducted annually by Campbell Research and Consulting. While the primary purpose of the survey is to collect data for comparison of return to work performance across jurisdictions, Comcare has asked the consultants to include a series of questions measuring claimant satisfaction against elements of Comcare's claimant service charter.

The survey measures for a sample population of claimants their overall level of satisfaction and service expectation, satisfaction by claimant service charter element, the receipt and clarity of information provided in relation to their claim and the ease of claiming.

Survey results for 2002-03 indicate that claimants continue to be moderately satisfied with Comcare's service. Aspects of Comcare's claims management service that claimants rated highest were accuracy, advising of rights, and Comcare's attitude to their claim and responsiveness to their enquiries.

Comcare rates less well on claimant satisfaction with the ease of claiming, with 39 per cent considering the process to be complicated (compared with a national average of 22 per cent). Comcare asked Campbell Research and Consulting to conduct additional research into this issue in 2001 and has sought to address the specific concerns with a redesigned form for claiming workers' compensation. Comcare will continue to monitor this issue using Return to Work Monitor data.

Attached are copies of the Return to Work Monitor report for Comcare premium paying agencies for 2001-02 and 2002-03.

Comcare also engaged Campbell Research and Consulting to assess pre-premium claimant satisfaction and service needs in 2001. This qualitative research found that pre-premium claimants are satisfied with the way their routine transactions with Comcare are handled and reported that benefit payments and medical bills are generally processed quickly and efficiently.

However pre-premium claimants also reported that difficulties may occur during claim review processes. They reported that they had experienced some difficulty in getting clear explanation of how their benefits were calculated and also information on what they were entitled to claim and how to claim it.

Comcare has responded to these issues by developing improved communication products for pre-premium claims, including plain English letters, information sheets that explain why and how Comcare reviews claims, guide to entitlements and how to claim them and a twice yearly newsletter.