

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Agency - Comcare

DEEWR Question No.EW0945_10

Senator Abetz asked on 10/02/2010, Hansard page 18.

Question

NEW MODEL WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY LAWS

Senator ABETZ—It was a very good question. Can I ask in relation to the psychosocial category: can we bring that down further between—once again, I trust this is not an artificial delineation—bullying and what we might call harassment/sexual harassment? I would be interested to know whether the sexual harassment issues that you are confronted with have either increased or decreased. In that total data set, I am just wondering whether bullying may have increased but sexual harassment decreased, which has seen an overall decrease in the numbers but nevertheless bullying is on the rise, or vice versa—bullying might be on the decrease but sexual harassment on the increase but the overall number is still decreasing. Can you shed some light on that for us? Mr O'Connor—Yes, I will take that on notice to give you the breakdown, but certainly the mental disease claims are broken up through a coding mechanism. As I have mentioned before, that coding structure has not changed, and there is a category for work related harassment and/or workplace bullying. There is a separate injury code for other harassment, which might be racial vilification, it might be sexual or it might be violence. It does highlight the difficulty, to make sure that we have a clear understanding of the different injury coding, but I am happy to report back and provide on notice the breakdown and the history over the last few years across our jurisdiction within the categories of mental disease claims. Senator ABETZ—If you could do that for me, I would be much obliged. Thank you.

Answer

Comcare has provided the following response.

Claims statistics

The Type of Occurrence Classifications System (TOOCS) is used by all Australian Workers' Compensation jurisdictions, including Comcare, for the coding of workers' compensation claims. This ensures consistent coding of such claims across Australia. Further information is available at; <http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/swa/AboutUs/Publications/TOOCSTypesofOccurrenceClassificationSystem.htm>

In accordance with TOOCS, Comcare's system records nature of injury "mental

diseases” claims against two mechanisms of incident. Code 87 is for “work related harassment and/or workplace bullying” and code 88 is for “other harassment”.

The table below details for the previous 4 financial years, the number of claims accepted under the Comcare scheme (codes 87 and 88) against the total number of claims accepted in each of those years.

Year	Number of work related harassment and/or workplace bullying (Code 87) claims	Number of other harassment (Code 88) claims	Total number of claims	Work related harassment and/or workplace bullying as % of total claims	Other harassment as % of total claims
2005-06	134	16	9911	1.4%	0.2%
2006-07	123	15	9727	1.3%	0.2%
2007-08	87	8	7860	1.1%	0.1%
2008-09	114	7	9019	1.3%	0.1%