

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2011-2012

Agency - Comcare

DEEWR Question No.EW0088_12

Senator Abetz provided in writing.

Question

Warnings That Comcare Received About The Lack Of Proper Scope Of Hsrs Involved In The Survey

Documents to be tabled: Email from Commissioner Powell to Colleen Kelly (OHS Policy Comcare) dated 15 May 2009 (Doc 83) Final Report of Stoker and Wright (2009) (doc 500) Email from Colleen Kelly to others in Comcare dated 17 July 2009 (doc 103) Email from Shaun Lennard (ATO) to Comcare 25 January 2010 (doc 97) 1.Please look at the email from Commissioner Powell to Colleen Kelly (OHS Policy Comcare) dated 15 May 2009 (Doc 83). Does Commissioner Powell write that "We must ensure that HSRs from self-insurers are also consulted"? 2.Given Commissioner Powell's concerns, what action was taken to avoid a misrepresentative sample because of a lack of representation of HSRs from self-insurers in the survey sample? 3.Please refer to the list of organizations on p. 26 of the Stoker and Wright (2009) report (Doc 500). Did HSRs from self insurers (TNT, Thales Telstra) represent 53 of the 403 where the organization is identified? 4.What is the proportion of employees from self-insurers in the total scheme? 5.Is it greater than 13% 6.Do you think 13% was enough to represent the thoughts of HSRs in the private sector? 7.By way of comparison now please look at the data on p27 of the Stoker and Wright (2009) report (Doc 500). Does this show that 9% of the people that responded were not even HSRs? 8.Do you think it is satisfactory that the number of people who were not even HSRs were given nearly as much say as HSRs from the entire private sector? 9.DidATOHSRs represent 30% of the entire survey? 10.Did the ATOHSRS on their own therefore represent more than double the private sector input? 11.Was this bias in the survey of any concern? 12.Please look at the email from Colleen Kelly to various Comcare staff expressing concern that the survey was being populated mainly by Commonwealth agencies dated 17 July 2009 (Doc 103). Does it state that there had been a high percentage response to the survey from Commonwealth agencies and that there is a desire to ensure that the survey was representative? 13.Clearly there was concern that the survey was not representative. What response did Comcare take in response to this observation? 14.Please look at the email from Shaun Lennard, ATO to Comcare on 25 January 2010 (Doc 97). Did the ATO point out the significant number of the HSRs that were represented in the survey respondents? 15.What response did Comcare taken in response to the observation of the ATO?

Answer

Comcare has provided the following responses.

1. Yes.
2. An email was sent to all self-insurers dated 17 July 2009 reminding them of the review and directing them to the online survey.

3. Yes.
4. As at 30 June 2010, employees from licensees represented 162,725 out of 371,300 full time equivalents (excluding the Australian Defence Force). This is approximately 44 per cent. If the question relates only to private sector companies, then the proportion is approximately 35 per cent.
5. Yes.
6. 13 per cent appears to be a calculation based the 'top ten' sites table at page 26. It assumes there was no representation from any of the other self insurers.
7. Yes. The report indicates that most of the 9 per cent who stated that they were not currently HSRs went on to state that they had been a HSR recently and in some cases for a long period of time. A few were also Deputy HSRs.
8. An assumption is made in the question (refer to answers 6 and 7).
9. This cannot be determined as only the 'top ten' sites are listed in the table on page 26 of the report. However, 135 organisations were represented overall. Further, as noted in the report, this is 'possibly explained by the ATO Training Unit's involvement in the consultation process and their active encouragement of the HSRs to respond.'
10. This cannot be determined as only the 'top ten' sites are listed in the table on page 26 of the report. However, 135 organisations were represented overall.
11. Refer to response to question 6.
12. Yes, noting that Ms Kelly's email does not express concern.
13. An email was sent to all self-insurers dated 17 July 2009 reminding them of the review and directing them to the online survey.
14. Yes.
15. The response was noted.