

## EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2008-09 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome** Comcare

**DEEWR Question No.** EW905\_09

Senator Humphries asked on Thursday 23 October 2008, EEWHR Hansard page 91.

#### **Question**

*Has the rate of claims per 1,000 full-time employees of the Commonwealth been affected by amendments to the SRC Act which affected journey claims and recess claims? Specifically, is there a break up in the figures of what the reduction might have been attributable to in terms of journey claims and what the reduction might have been attributable to recess break injuries?*

Senator HUMPHRIES—Can you tell me whether the rate of claims per 1,000 full-time employees of the Commonwealth has been affected by the amendments that were made to the SRC Act last year affecting journey claims and recess claims?

Mr Dolan—There has certainly been a substantial reduction over a number of years in the number of claims per 1,000 employees. We are trying hard to distinguish how much of that reduction is a result of effective prevention of injury by employers in our system and how much relates to the amendments that the parliament passed in March last year. Our assessment was that there would be approximately a 15 per cent reduction in the number of claims as a result of those changes. That seems to have been the pattern that we have seen so far. We can get you more detailed information if you wish on that.

Senator HUMPHRIES—But when did those changes come into effect?

Mr Dolan—They came into effect in April 2007.

Senator HUMPHRIES—We have got a year's data at this stage, or something of that order.

Mr Dolan—I am sorry I did not bring it with me, but I will make it available.

Senator HUMPHRIES—Can you break up in those figures what the reduction might have been attributable to in terms of journey claims and what reduction might have been attributable to recess break injuries?

Mr Dolan—We can probably do that. Claims for recess breaks are a comparably small proportion. I will certainly make a reasonable attempt to do that.

#### **Answer**

*Comcare has provided the following response.*

In 2006-07, Comcare received from Commonwealth employees, 29.0 claims per 1,000 full-time equivalent (FTE). In 2007-08, it received from Commonwealth employees 19.8 claims per 1,000 FTE.

In the 2006-07 financial year, Comcare received from Commonwealth employees 1.3 claims per 1000 FTE<sup>1</sup> for injuries that occurred during a recess<sup>2</sup> and 3.8 claims per 1000 FTE for injuries that occurred whilst travelling to work. In the 2007/08 financial year<sup>3</sup>, Comcare received 0.5 claims per 1000 FTE from Commonwealth employees for injuries that occurred

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the data relating to journey and recess claims has been analysed by date of injury, rather than date claim received, in order to more correctly assess the impact of the amendments to the SRC Act.

<sup>2</sup> Defined as claims coded with a duty status of "authorised sporting events" and "while having a break".

<sup>3</sup> Note that amendments to the journey and recess provisions of the SRC Act commenced 13 April 2007.

during a recess and 0.3 claims per 1000 FTE from Commonwealth employees for injuries that occurred whilst travelling to work.

On this basis, about 50% of the reduction in claims received could reasonably be attributed to the changed provisions relating to journey and recess claims. Viewed another way, the changed provisions have led to a reduction in claims received of the order of 15%.