

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.EW0541_11

Senator Xenophon provided in writing.

Question

SPs - CUSTOMER SERVICE

What standards of customer service does the Department expect from providers?

- i. How are these standards monitored?
- ii. Given reports that providers are double-booking appointments and forcing consultants to deal with two clients at once, does the Department feel that these standards are being met?

Answer

- i. Providers are required to meet the standards of service set out in the relevant Service Guarantees and the Employment Services Code of Practice which form part of each employment service provider's contract with the Department.

The Code of Practice sets out the principles and standards that each provider must observe in the delivery of employment services. Service Guarantees are in place for each phase of employment services and provide a description of the types of assistance job seekers can expect from providers together with the obligations and responsibilities for individual job seekers.

The department monitors these standards through contract monitoring and performance discussions with providers on a range of matters which include feedback from job seekers through the department's or the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service's customer service hotlines. The Complaints Resolution and Referral Service is a complaints resolution service for people using Australian Government-funded disability employment and advocacy services such as Disability Employment Services.

The department also operates a survey instrument which allows for direct feedback from jobseekers. If a trend is identified in relation to a provider this is taken into consideration in a performance discussion.

- ii. Providers and job seekers decide the most appropriate form of contact based on individual circumstances as well as the phase of employment servicing the job seeker is participating in at the time. This may vary from individual appointments through to group appointments for job seekers. For example, when a provider is holding a general information session on a recruitment opportunity or a training session on resume writing and job search skills, it might be more appropriate or effective to hold a group appointment. In these situations a job seeker is not required to disclose private information, and they are able to meet with their employment consultant privately if they prefer.