Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES – 24 FEBRUARY 2009

Human Services Portfolio

Department/Agency: Medicare Australia
Outcome/Output Group: Outcome 1/Output Group 1
Topic: Unplanned leave

Senator: Scullion

Question reference number: HS10

Type of question: Hansard F&PA 130, 24 February 2009

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April 2009

Question:

HS10:   Senator SCULLION—I notice that one of your critical performance indicators in the budget was to reduce the amount of your unscheduled leave.

HS10a: How many days were lost due to unplanned leave in the period July 2008 to now?

HS10b: Perhaps on notice you can provide me with a weekly and monthly breakdown of this, but in general terms how does it compare with 2007-08 and 2006-07?

HS10c: Are we meeting the KPIs? Perhaps you can give me a general response in terms of the trends of how we are going reducing the amount of unscheduled leave.

Answer:

HS10a: There were 48,234 days of unplanned leave in Medicare Australia in the period 1 July 2008 to 24 February 2009.

HS10b: A weekly and monthly breakdown for the 2008-09 financial year to date is attached (see Table 1 below). Based on the February 2009 data, the forecast annualised trend of unplanned leave for 2008-09 is expected to be approximately 3,500 days less than in 2007-08, but 5,460 higher than 2006-07. There were 76,227 days of unplanned leave in the 2007-08 financial year and 67,267 in the 2006-07 financial year.

HS10c: Consistent with other APS agencies, Medicare Australia's unplanned leave Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is based on the number of days absent per full time equivalent (FTE). Unplanned leave rates have fluctuated over the last 10 years, but overall unplanned leave rates have trended downwards (see Table 2 below). The rolling 12 month unplanned leave target for February 2009 is 13.4 days unplanned leave for each fulltime equivalent employee. Medicare Australia's unplanned leave rate as at the end of February 2009 is 13.09 days.
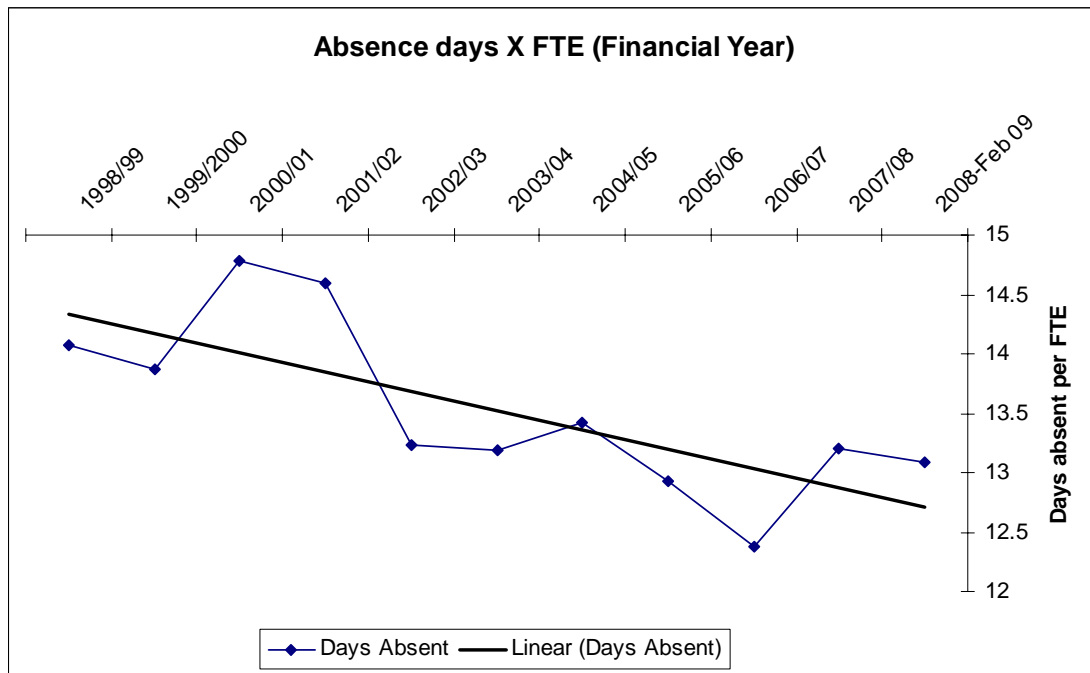
Unplanned leave figures include employees on long term sick leave and leave taken for caring responsibilities. Medicare Australia's unplanned leave is influenced by our staffing profile, which includes 81 per cent of women in our workforce (compared with 57 per cent in the APS), who often have caring responsibilities within families.

Table 1: Medicare Australia Unplanned Leave 01 July 2008 to 24 February 2009

By Month		By Week Unplanned Leave Starting during the Week Ending					
Jul-08	7,370.47	05-Jul-2008	1,344.85	27-Sep-2008	1,351.28	20-Dec-2008	1,340.07
Aug-08	6,879.12	12-Jul-2008	1,718.36	04-Oct-2008	1,381.76	27-Dec-2008	544.33
Sep-08	7,049.44	19-Jul-2008	1,624.95	11-Oct-2008	1,263.57	03-Jan-2009	369.59
Oct-08	6,312.73	26-Jul-2008	1,655.21	18-Oct-2008	1,591.42	03-Jan-2009	288.63
Nov-08	5,889.86	02-Aug-2008	1,710.84	25-Oct-2008	1,345.09	10-Jan-2009	1,201.54
Dec-08	5,578.84	09-Aug-2008	1,555.97	01-Nov-2008	1,381.71	17-Jan-2009	1,070.70
Jan-09	4,798.56	16-Aug-2008	1,540.39	08-Nov-2008	1,318.25	24-Jan-2009	1,209.77
Feb-09	4,355.21	23-Aug-2008	1,762.92	15-Nov-2008	1,389.60	31-Jan-2009	1,027.92
Total at 24/2/09	***48,234.23**	30-Aug-2008	1,677.23	22-Nov-2008	1,470.94	07-Feb-2009	1,310.86
		06-Sep-2008	1,981.20	29-Nov-2008	1,706.85	14-Feb-2009	1,259.19
		13-Sep-2008	1,620.62	06-Dec-2008	1,694.47	21-Feb-2009	1,386.16
		20-Sep-2008	1,448.82	13-Dec-2008	1,631.30	28-Feb-2009	400.00
						Total at 28/2/09	***48,576.36**

* A non-standard report was generated to capture the weekly data. The weekly data was captured on 'week ending' dates and as a consequence, the first and last weeks in the table include more days than used for the 'By Month' figures. For this reason there is a small variation between the total 'monthly' and 'weekly' data.

Table 2: Unplanned Leave Trend – Financial Years commencing 1 July 1998 to 28 February 2009

Absence days X FTE (Financial Year)

Number of pages: 3