

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

Budget Estimates Hearing 25-29 May 2009

**Question: PM36a-c**

**Topic: Health and wellbeing services available for PM&C staff**

**Type of Question: Hansard, F&PA 25 May p112-114**

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 July 2009**

**Number of pages: 3**

**PM36a:**

**Senator BERNARDI-In a similar vein-we are talking about work-life balance I guess-there was an information and resource service related to work-life balance introduced in 2007-08 to help staff 'source any type of dependent care, health or lifestyle service'. Are you familiar with that?**

**Mr Mrdak-Yes.**

**Senator BERNARDI-How many staff have availed themselves of that service?**

**Mr Mrdak-We offer a range of employee assistance services. I will take that on notice if you do not mind and get you a breakdown of which of our services our staff have availed themselves of and how many people have used them.**

**Answer:**

The Department engaged Childcare at Work Australia Pty Ltd, trading as Families at Work, on 1 September 2007 to provide a Family Assistance Service (support for carers) in support of a commitment made in the department's *Collective Agreement 2007-2010*.

Families at Work provides a service called Work-Life Links, an information and resource service, to source information regarding dependent care, health or lifestyle services. Information may include: childcare or vacation care, senior care, disability, respite or palliative care or relocation information.

Since its inception in 2007, a total of nine (9) employees have used the service at a total cost to the Department of \$4,826.26. In 2007-08, seven (7) employees used the service at a cost of \$3,232.63 and in 2008-09 two (2) employees used the service at a cost of \$1,593.63.

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**PM36b:**

**Senator BERNARDI—Thank you. Could I also have the cost of the information and the resourcing of it.**

**Answer:**

The Department paid an establishment fee of \$1,000 with an annual retainer of \$500. The contract with Families at Work expires 1 September 2010. The service is available to all employees and the Department is charged \$165 per hour for use of the services.

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**PM36c:**

**Senator BERNARDI—You have talked about the success and Senator Cameron was interested in the stress reduction and benefits to the organisation. Have you seen a reduction in employee absenteeism?**

**Mr Mrdak—I would have to check what the figures are. I think the taking of personal circumstances leave and sick leave has fallen. I will check that.**

...

**Mr Mrdak—... We will get you the full range of the programs we provide, the numbers who are participating and what information we have in relation to correlation with leave and the like.**

**Answer:**

The table below provides details of the health and wellbeing programs offered to employees in 2008-09.

<b>Range of programs offered during 2008-09</b>	<b>Number of employees that participated</b>	<b>Cost (\$)</b>
Weight Watchers At Work Program 1 (20 Feb 09 – 15 May 09)	17	1,622
Weight Watchers At Work Program 2 (29 May 09 – 28 Aug 09)	16	1,526
Trial Fitness Class (Circuit)	19	149
Fitness Class (Circuit Oct 08 – Dec 08)	21	Nil
Trial Fitness Class (Boxing)	29	149
Fitness Class Program 1 (Circuit and boxing, Feb 09 – April 09)	28	377
Fitness Class Program 2 (Circuit and boxing, April 09 – June 09)	43	630
Health and Wellbeing Seminars (6 seminars from May – June 09)	Average 20 per seminar	4,290
Flu Vaccinations	261	5,883
Quit Smoking Initiatives	3	319
Work-life Links	2	1,594
Employee Assistance Program	20	12,467
<b>Total cost of programs</b>		<b>\$20,006</b>

The number of staff in the Department taking personal/sick leave has reduced by 8.5 per cent from 2006-07 to 2007-08 and 10.5 per cent from 2007-08 to 2008-09 (as at 30 April) resulting in an overall reduction of 19 per cent over the period.