

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Budget Estimates Hearing—May 2012

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: WHS  
Question: 75  
Hansard reference F&PA p.33, 21 May 2012

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 July 2012**

**Senator SINGH:** I am talking more about your work environment—an ergonomic assessment and an OH&S assessment of your work practices in the working environment.

**Mr Kenny:** For DPS staff, those issues are addressed by—I do not have the exact title—a subsection within our HR services group, largely for DPS staff, although they do provide advice upon request to others. I would imagine that the Senate and Reps department staff would have a similar service available through their HR functions. I do not know by how the role would be fulfilled for people who are employed as MOP staff, either in the ministerial wing or in the offices.

**Senator SINGH:** Is this something that you can find out?

**Mr Kenny:** We can take that on notice.

**Senator SINGH:** What is not clear, even for DPS staff, is how that is being offered. Is it a mandatory thing that when they start work they are offered an assessment, or is it something that they have to ask for? I will give you a comparative example. For MOPS staff in electorate offices, at least, it is an automatic service. It is provided to all MOPS staff. It is not provided to them here in Parliament House. I am asking whether it is provided to any DPS staff here in Parliament House and then, further, what is provided to MOPS staff and to senators and members?

**Mr Kenny:** We can take some of that on notice. When I say 'some', I mean that we may not be able to answer some of it—because it is related to other departments.

## Answer

Responsibility for arranging ergonomic assessments for building occupants is shared across departments. For example, the Department of the Senate provides workstation assessments and advice to senators as required. The Department of Finance and Deregulation is responsible for arranging workstation assessments for senators' and members' staff as required.

In regard to DPS employees, DPS provides Workstation Assessments (**WSAs**) at any time during an employee's tenure for all ongoing and non-ongoing employees of DPS. WSAs are provided under contract by an external company with expertise in ergonomic and rehabilitation case management.

Staff access the WSA service via the DPS intranet. DPS also provides staff with an online guide to setting up workstations relating to desk and chair heights etc.

Information and a guide on correct workstation set-ups are provided in hard-copy to all staff on commencement with the department as part of their induction program however it is not mandatory for a new staff member to accept the offer of a WSA by the department's provider.

The Work Health and Safety (WHS) Unit actively promotes the availability of WSAs in corporate compliance training courses, *DPS WHS Awareness* and *WHS for DPS Supervisors*. All staff are now required to attend one of these courses every two years.