

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Finance and Administration Portfolio**

**Department of Finance and Administration**

November Estimates Hearings 2003-04 – 4 November 2003

**Question: 35C (a)**

**Across all Outcomes and Outputs**

**Topic: 2003 Management Advisory Committee report**

**Hansard page: N/A**

**Written Question on Notice: 4 November 2003**

**Senator Carr asked:**

What family friendly or work-life balance initiatives exist in the department?

**Answer:**

The department continues to support family friendly initiatives such as flexible work hours; time off in lieu of additional hours worked; the provision of three weeks full pay per year for sick leave and carer's responsibilities (no cap on the amount of personal leave which can be taken for carers' purposes); part-time work; carer's rooms in certain Finance buildings; and an Employee Assistance Program offering confidential counselling for employees and their families. On-site services include the delivery of certain formal post-graduate courses by the Australian National University, a gymnasium, an automatic teller machine and dry cleaning, to allow easy access to staff.

In 2002, Finance developed an on-site early childhood centre, the Abacus childcare centre, as part of its Treasury Building tenancy. The centre, which is licensed for 79 places, is Fringe Benefits Tax exempt and access to it is available to all Finance staff, who have priority of access. Currently, 31 Finance staff have placed 52 children with the centre (21 children in full-time places and 31 children in part-time places). The centre is operated by a specialist community-based service provider and aims to be a model of excellence and provide best practice in care and early childhood education.

Staff have access to Laptop computers to allow them to dial-in from home and to help them balance their work and carer's responsibilities. The Finance Social Club organises family friendly social events like a quiz night and an annual children's Christmas party.

**Date: December 2003**

**Cleared by (SES): Lembit Suur**

**Group/Branch: Corporate/HR Services**

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**Question: 35C (b)**

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**Topic: 2003 Management Advisory Committee report**

**Hansard page: N/A**

**Written Question on Notice: 4 November 2003**

**Senator Carr asked:**

What family friendly or work-life balance initiatives are available to staff through the certified agreement?

**Answer:**

The Finance Certified Agreement provides for flexible working hours; the provision of three weeks full pay per year for sick leave and carer's responsibilities (no cap on the amount of personal leave which can be taken for carers' purposes); time off in lieu of additional hours worked; and an Employee Assistance Program offering confidential counselling for departmental employees and their families.

Flexible working arrangements provide for people to work an average 36 hours and 45 minutes per week, with significant flexibility in relation to hours worked on any particular working day. Employees may also initiate proposals for part-time work. The department is generally supportive of requests for part-time work and employees returning from Parental or Maternity leave have access to part-time work.

Finance has also put in place a number of work-life balance arrangements for staff through other policies and initiatives. These are outlined in the answer to Question 35 C a).

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**Question: 35C (c)**

**Across all Outcomes and Outputs**

**Topic: 2003 Management Advisory Committee report**

**Hansard page: N/A**

**Written Question on Notice: 4 November 2003**

**Senator Carr asked:**

What family friendly or work-life balance initiatives are contained in the certified agreement, but the granting of them in individual cases is discretionary on the part of the organisation?

**Answer:**

The following family friendly initiatives are granted to individuals on a case-by-case basis - part-time work and time off in lieu of additional hours worked.

The department is generally supportive of requests for part-time work and employees returning from parental or maternity leave have access to part-time work.

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