

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Parliament Portfolio

Joint House Department

Supplementary Budget Estimates, Monday 3 November 2003

Question: P19

Outcome:

Topic: 2003 Management Advisory Committee (MAC) Report—
Organisation Renewal

Hansard Page: N/A written question on notice

Senator Carr asked:

Work-life balance issues have been identified as important for the public service. The March 2003 Management Advisory Committee report Organisational Renewal discussed workforce planning issues, stating:

As the labour market tightens into the future, there will be increased pressure on attracting the skills required and maintaining competitive remuneration packages which support effective recruitment at the base grade and lateral levels.

Employment conditions and the capacity for work/life balance will be an important element of such packages, and may offer APS agencies a competitive edge ...

Increased flexibility in working patterns and arrangements will be an important part of the response to the demographic changes, recognising the life stage dynamics influencing workforce participation.

The APS has been a leader in providing family friendly work practices (e.g. part-time work, flexible working hours, home based work, purchased leave) and needs to continue in this role through flexible conditions and supportive management approaches as part of its attraction and retention strategy.

In light of the MAC report, the following questions are asked of each department:

- 1) What has been the department's response to the MAC report to date?
- 2) Which issues identified in the MAC report have been identified as priority areas for the department?
- 3) What family friendly or work-life balance initiatives:
 - a) exist in the department;
 - b) are available to staff through the certified agreement; or
 - c) are contained in the certified agreement, but the granting of them in individual cases is discretionary on the part of the organisation.
- 4) What family friendly or work-life balance initiatives has the department introduced in, or since, the implementation of the department's most recent certified agreement?

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- 5) With respect to certified agreement-based family friendly or work-life balance provisions:
- a) What number and proportion of departmental staff are making use of such provisions in areas including:
 - i) purchased leave (also known as 48/52 schemes);
 - ii) negotiated part-time work arrangements;
 - iii) parental leave;
 - iv) use of information, advice or counselling services made available by the department;
 - v) departmental provision of facilities (such as family care facilities); and
 - vi) home-based work.

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Answer:

Question 1

JHD is awaiting the circulation of the further package of materials as outlined in the Public Service Commissioner's advice of 20 March 2003. However, the report has:

- been circulated and noted by the Secretary, Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Executive Leaders, HR Director and HR area;
- generally assisted in the development of the *JHD Corporate Health Index* for the JHD Corporate Plan 2003–04, in line with a Triple Bottom Line reporting framework. The Corporate Health Index reports in four key areas:
 1. a safe job
 2. a supportive workplace
 3. a capable workforce
 4. an organisation sustained for the future.

In addition, issues raised in the MAC report relating to ageing workforce profile and building organisational capability were also highlighted in *JHD Workplace Diversity Program Evaluation Report*, as issues to consider in the development of the next JHD Workplace Diversity Program.

Question 2

JHD Executive Management is aware of the potential issues that may impact on the future JHD workforce. JHD monitors its corporate health through a series of reports that are prepared by the Human Resource section and is discussed quarterly at the JHD Executive Board of Management. These reports provide detailed information on age demographics; turnover (both known and probable separation); unplanned absences; external labour market issues, etc; and, where appropriate, provides comparison with APS trends.

Over the past 12 months, JHD has set up a committee to investigate knowledge management issues in JHD. This committee is now in the process of engaging a consultant to undertake a knowledge mapping exercise with a view to setting up a knowledge management strategy for JHD.

In 2004, JHD, together with the Department of Parliamentary Library and Department of Reporting Staff, will be abolished and their functions will be resumed under a new parliamentary department—the Department of Parliamentary Services. The priorities for the new department (certainly in the first 12 months) will revolve around organisation design, cultural alignment and organisational capability and renewal—all which will need to be underpinned by systematic workforce analysis and capability planning, in line with the new corporate business objectives. Knowledge management strategies will have an important role in facilitating the transfer of knowledge from the former three departments to the new department.

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There will be a large emphasis on management and leadership approaches to lead and facilitate the organisational change. Strategies that may underpin these include reviewing workplace agreements and people and performance management processes, undertaking a skills audit and designing learning and development and recruitment strategies to achieve the right skills balance for the new department.

Question 3

Joint House Department Certified Agreement 2002-05

Family friendly/work-life balance Initiatives that exist in JHD	Available through Certified Agreement	Contained in CA, but granting is discretionary
Carers Leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 days per year (Full pay). Accrual not cumulative. 	✓	
Additional Annual Leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purchase 1- 4 weeks additional leave each calendar year. 	✓	
Discretionary Leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Paid/Unpaid Leave) 	✓	✓
Stand Down <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 working days between Christmas and New Year 	✓	
Employee Assistance Provider	✓	
Flexible working arrangements - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for employees at any classification (consistent with operational requirements) 	✓	✓
Permanent part-time work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incl. access on return from maternity leave. 	✓	✓
Childcare Information Hotline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advisory service provided by HR 		

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Parliamentary Security Operations Staff Certified Agreement 2001-03

Family friendly/work-life balance Initiatives that exist in JHD	Available through Certified Agreement	Contained in CA, but granting is discretionary
Emergency/Carers Leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 days per year (Full pay). Non-cumulative. 	✓	
Additional Annual Leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purchase 1- 4 weeks additional leave each calendar year. 	✓	✓
Miscellaneous Leave (paid/unpaid leave) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • covering reasons not covered by other types of leave 	✓	✓
Maternity Leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • option of converting full pay leave to half pay 	✓	
Employee Assistance Provider	✓	
Part time work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access on return from maternity/paternity leave 	✓	
Job Sharing	✓	✓
Home Based work	✓	✓
Encouraging Staff Fitness – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reimbursement up to \$100 per year for participation in own time, in fitness & health programs, incl. gym membership, quit smoking, stress management 	✓	

Question 4

- No new provisions/initiatives were included in JHD Certified Agreement 2002-05.
- ACT Bushfires (18 Jan 2003)—access to Employee Assistance Provider; staff able to access Discretionary leave to deal with property loss or be on standby/alert.
- Workplace Diversity Program 2000-03 has been extended for one year as a result of the creation of the new department. The Action Plan continues the workplace/family initiatives that were initially set up in the first program eg: such Childcare hotline; promotion of CA Family/Work life provisions, EAP services to families, promotion of healthy lifestyle activities, etc.

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- An evaluation of the JHD Workplace Diversity Program was undertaken in 2003. Part of the evaluation included a statistical analysis of the usage of departmental family/work life initiatives in line with the Program's KPIs

Question 5

	Number of Staff at 30/09/03	Proportion to Department	Number of Staff at 14/11/03	Proportion to Department
Purchased leave	12	4.04%	21	4.64%
Negotiated part-time work arrangements	16	5.38%	18	3.97%
Parental leave (discretionary leave)	1	0.3%	1	0.2%
Use of information, advice or counselling services	8	2.69%	Not Available	
Departmental provision of facilities	0		0	
Home-based work	0		0	

** Joint House Department acquired 152 Parliamentary Security Service staff on 23 October 2003 from the Departments of the House of Representatives and Senate, which resulted in an overall 52% increase in staffing and the administration of two different Certified Agreements. The above figures show the proportion of staff pre- and post-23 October 2003.