

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 Supplementary Hearings 2003-2004, 3-4 November 2003

PM70(b) ANAO

1) What has been the department's response to the MAC report to date?

ANAO Response: the ANAO has in place through our 2003 – 2006 certified agreement a set of conditions which include:

- flexible annual leave arrangements with access to 5 weeks annual leave, accruing fortnightly. The leave is available for immediate use and the period of absence can be extended by converting the leave to a combination of full and/or half pay;
- access to work from home;
- opportunity to move from full time employment to part-time employment;
- paid absence for maternity purposes of 15 weeks full pay or 30 weeks half pay and/or a combination of both;
- with approval of the supervisor, a staff member may arrange their working patterns (starting/finishing times) to suit their personal requirements; and
- payment of fees to approved childcare facilities through salary packaging arrangements.

2) Which issues identified in the MAC report have been identified as priority areas for the department?

ANAO Response: as part of our Workforce Planning framework the ANAO has put in place a number of arrangements, including a:

- HR reporting regime which provides a suite of people related information;
- succession planning and talent management policies which provide mechanisms for managing succession for key positions;
- recruitment and selection policy which assists in attracting and hiring people with the right skills mix and cultural fit ;
- reward and recognition scheme that acknowledges and rewards performance that exceeds normal day to day requirements;
- graduate recruitment and development program that provides for the recruitment of graduates who have the potential for development and sustained careers within the ANAO;
- staff retention arrangements which help to provide opportunities for staff to participate in fixed term secondments and exchange programs to enhance their skills and knowledge base which can be utilised when they return back to the ANAO; and
- mentoring program which provides a structured support program for staff.

Taken together, these initiatives represent a structured and systematic approach to the management of the ANAO's workforce tailored to the ANAO's requirements.

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3) What family friendly or work-life balance initiatives:

a) exist in the department;

ANAO Response: staff have access to a variety of employment measures to assist them with work-life balance. These are included in the ANAO certified agreement, as referred to above.

b) are available to staff through the certified agreement; or

ANAO Response: as above.

c) are contained in the certified agreement, but the granting of them in individual cases is discretionary on the part of the organisation.

ANAO Response: the two day paid Christmas/New Year stand-down and 15 weeks paid maternity leave do not require formal approval. Access to the other benefits set out above is determined at the local workplace level and are agreed between the individual staff member and their supervisor.

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?

ANAO Response: increased paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 15 weeks was introduced in the current ANAO certified agreement on 19 May 2003. All other provisions have been available to staff since the commencement of the first ANAO certified agreement on 10 June 1998.

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);

ANAO Response: approximately 15% of staff utilise the flexibilities available under the ANAO annual leave provisions.

ii) negotiated part-time work arrangements;

ANAO Response: the ANAO currently has 12 part-time employees.

iii) parental leave; ANAO Response: while there is no designated parental leave as such, staff may utilise their annual leave, or other flexible working arrangements, including leave without pay, to participate in any parental responsibilities that they may wish.

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- iv) use of information, advice or counselling services made available by the department;**

ANAO Response: in the last 12 months sixteen staff and/or their family members utilised the ANAO sponsored Employee Assistance Program.

- v) departmental provision of facilities (such as family care facilities); and**

ANAO Response: ANAO does not have supervised family care facilities, but staff can bring children onto the premises on a limited basis in emergency circumstances.

- vi) home based work.**

ANAO Response: as access to home based work is approved at the local work place level, empirical data is not collected.