

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

Question: PM 72

Outcome 1 – The Governor-General is enabled to perform the constitutional, statutory, ceremonial; and public duties associated with the appointment.

Topic: Work-life balance issue

Hansard Page/ Direct on Notice: Written Question on Notice

Senator Kim Carr asked:

- 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?**
- 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.**

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

Answer:

- (1) The Office has noted the analysis and issues identified in the MAC report. The Office monitors its workforce age profiles; reviews remuneration levels and is sensitive towards establishing appropriate work-life balance arrangements. The Office does not generally have an attraction/retention issue and has many facets to its operations that contribute to it being an employer of choice. A number of the opportunities raised in the report have specifically been addressed in the Office's certified agreement and others will be investigated as circumstances allow.
- (2) The Office will be considering the impact on its operations over the coming few years of staff that may choose to leave due to 54/11 resignation or retirement at age 55. The Office will also be considering home-based work, amongst other options, as a means of addressing increasing clerical based workloads.
- (3) The following family friendly practices have been introduced by the Office
 - (a) working from home; purchased leave, extended bandwidths of working hours, flexible working hours, time-off in lieu of extra time worked, studies assistance and a learning and development framework, employee assistance program, parental leave, maternity leave.
 - (b) all the above are available through the certified agreement
 - (c) working from home, and studies assistance and learning and development opportunities.
- (4) The Office's 2002-2005 certified agreement provides for purchased leave, working from home, part-time work, flexibility in the level of overtime attributed to designated positions, introduction of an employee assistance program, and limiting the amount of recreation leave that can be accrued.
- (5) In respect to the financial year 2003-2004 to date:
 - (i) Nil
 - (ii) 7 (9%)
 - (iii) 2 (2%)
 - (iv) 3 (4%)
 - (v) not applicable
 - (vi) Nil