

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and agencies

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2005-2006, 1 November 2005

Question: HS48

Outcome 1, Output 1

Topic: Department of Human Services - Staffing

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR EVANS asked on 1/11/05:

1. By classification, how many staff are currently employed by DHS?
2. a) How many positions by classification are currently unfilled? b) Why are these positions unfilled?
3. a) What changes have occurred during the last financial year?
b) What are the reasons for these changes i.e. retrenchment/redundancies/retirement etc.?
4. How many staff are employed under a) Australian Workplace Agreements; b) Certified agreements; c) Individual contracts?
5. Please advise current levels of:
a) Sick leave, b) Stress leave by month, c) What are the reasons for any increases/decreases in sick or stress leave from month to month?
6. Has there been any legal action taken by employees against the DHS?
7. How many cases in total during the last financial year?
8. How many are now complete?
9. How many still outstanding?
10. Please provide an outline of each case, i.e. reason and outcome of each action?
11. What is the total cost of such action? What is the cost for each individual case?
12. What is the cost of external legal advice or other advice needed for each action, a) in total; b) per individual case?
13. Have any cases related to stress of staff dealing with clients?
14. Has there been complaints/incident made by staff relating to stress? Please provide details of each complaint/incident.
15. Has there been any staff resignations relating to stress? Please provide details.
16. Have there been any physical altercations between staff and clients reported? Please give details of each case.
17. How many staff are entitled to performance bonuses?
18. What was the amount paid in 2003/2004 compared to 2004/2005 in performance bonuses:
a) in total, b) per classification, c) give explanations of each on how the bonuses calculated.

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Answer:

The following answer includes the Department of Human Services, which consists of the Core Department, the Child Support Agency and CRS Australia.

1. Please refer to pages 228-232 of the Department of Human Services Annual Report 2004-2005.

2.

APS Classification	Unfilled Positions
APS2	7
APS3	75
APS3/4	1
APS4	10
APS4/5	1
APS5	16
APS6	18
EL1	10
EL2	4
SES	2
Rehabilitation Consultant 1/2 (CRS only)	10
Total	154

All unfilled positions are:

- currently advertised;
- have been advertised and have closed but have not yet been filled; and
- have non-ongoing or contractors in place, pending recruitment.

3. During the 2004-2005 period the Department of Human Services was established, with a core department, CRS Australia and the Child Support Agency as business units of the department. This resulted in a total staff of 5,303 at 30 June 2005.

During this period, there were:

43 retirements
5 voluntary redundancies
1 retrenchment

4. Please refer to pages 51, 77 and 99-100 of the Department of Human Services Annual Report 2004-2005.

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5. (a) Core Department
The figures for the period of response are based on small numbers and do not provide statistically meaningful data.
- Child Support Agency
The current level of sick leave is 13.16 days per person.
- CRS Australia
The current level of sick leave is 7.14 days per person.
- (b) Stress is not routinely captured as a reason for leave. Some data is available from Comcare as psychological injury statistics however this only includes cases for accepted compensable injuries of which stress may be a component. Comcare does not recognise stress as an illness. The most significant influence on sick leave is seasonal variances caused through colder months. This is consistent with APS norms.
6. Yes.
7. 8.
8. 7.
9. 1.
10. Of the 7 completed cases:
- five cases related to unfair dismissal claims made by former employees;
- one case related to a code of conduct investigation; and
- one case related to disputes about working conditions.
11. Total cost for the 7 cases finalised last financial year was \$321,190. On average this equates to \$45,884 per case.
12. The total cost of external legal advice on the 7 cases finalised last year was \$253,174. On average this equates to \$36,168 per case.
13. No.
14. Our insurer, Comcare, does not recognise stress as an illness.
15. For the period 1 July 2004 to mid March 2005, 140 exit interviews were analysed and of these 5 staff cited stress/poor health as a reason for leaving.
16. No.
17. All staff, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria for performance bonuses.

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18. There were no bonuses paid to staff in the Core Department during the 2004-2005 financial year. The table below shows bonuses paid to staff at the Child Support Agency and CRS Australia during 2004-2005.

Classification	2003-04	2004-05
APS1	\$10,839	\$8,602
APS2	\$100,921	\$122,235
APS3	\$78,617	\$80,928
APS4	\$61,863	\$90,716
APS5	\$69,816	\$67,736
APS6	\$56,115	\$71,198
EXEC 1	\$161,758	\$195,961
EXEC 2	\$126,669	\$201,921
Rehabilitation Consultant 1 (CRS only)	\$102,754	\$79,997
Rehabilitation Consultant 2 (CRS only)	\$980,708	\$1,165,885
Total	\$1,750,060	\$2,085,179

This is calculated based on the percentage of bonus, fortnightly working hours and length of service at particular level over the 12 month period.