

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: HS50**

**Outcome 1, Output Group 1.1**

**Topic: Medicare Australia - 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. How many positions by classification are currently unfilled? Why are these positions unfilled?
3. What changes have occurred during the last financial year? 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? 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?

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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.

**Answer:**

1. The following refers to employees of Medicare Australia as at 30 June 2005.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>30/06/2005</b>
APS1	591
APS2	339
APS3	2061
APS4	316
APS5	656
APS6	407
Exec Level 1	450
Exec Level 2	305
SES	46
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5171</b>

- 2.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Vacant Position</b>
APS1	39
APS2	8
APS3	36
APS4	69
APS5	68
APS6	113
CSO(Broadband)	659
EL1	66
EL2	30
SES	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1093</b>

The large number of unfilled Customer Support Officer (CSO) positions represents a surge capacity with Medicare Branch Offices nationwide. A number of remaining vacancies are unfunded and are now being de activated as a result of staffing restructures and efficiencies.

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3. (a)

<b>Classification</b>	<b>30/06/2004</b>	<b>30/06/2005</b>
APS1	433	591
APS2	260	339
APS3	2154	2061
APS4	320	316
APS5	597	656
APS6	410	407
Exec Level 1	518	450

(b)

<b>Separations</b>	<b>FY 04/05</b>
Involuntary Retirement	4
Voluntary Retirement	134
End of Contract	188
Resignation	446
Abandoned Employment	1
Death	5
Dismissal	28

(c)

<b>Engagements</b>	<b>FY 04/05</b>
National Office	247
NSW	165
QLD	209
SA	84
TAS	46
VIC	123
WA	106

4.

30/06/2005

- |      |                                |              |
|------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| (a). | Australian Workplace Agreement | 322          |
| (b)  | Certified Agreement            | 4849         |
| (c)  | Individual Contracts           | No employees |

5.

30/06/2005

- |     |                       |  |
|-----|-----------------------|--|
| (a) | Sick Leave            | 11.81 days per person (includes 0.81 days pp Comp leave) |
| (b) | Stress leave by month | N/A  |

Medicare Australia employees receive an accrual of personal leave each year for the circumstances where they are sick, caring for family or other persons, or for special circumstances. There is no category of stress leave. There are seasonal variations such as flu and other illnesses in the winter months which is consistent with APS norms There is no

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category of stress leave. There are seasonal variations such as flu and other illnesses in the winter months which is consistent with APS norms.

6. No.
7. Nil.
8. Not applicable.
9. Not applicable.
10. Not applicable.
11. Not applicable.
12. Not applicable.
13. Not applicable.
14. Yes, there were five formal complaints. Informal complaints are not recorded and are often discussed directly with the Employee Assistance Program.
  - 1) An employee lodged a claim, following a decision by her manager to decline a request the employee made. The claim was disallowed by Comcare.
  - 2) A claim was lodged with Comcare as a result of performance management. Employee withdrew claim and employment was annulled.
  - 3) A claim was lodged with Comcare for stress and anxiety. The employee claimed stress and anxiety as a result of the discussion between their Manager and themselves regarding performance. Employee has requested a review of the decision and to date has not returned to the work place. Review still pending with Comcare.
  - 4) An employee reported stress concerns due to pressure in the Call Centre. This employee has been provided with rehabilitation and moved to a different programme. The employee is now happy in his new environment. No workers compensation claim was lodged.
  - 5) An employee lodged a Workers Compensation claim for "stress" caused by a formal review of action into actions the employee had taken. No determination has been received to date from Comcare, but Medicare Australia has not supported the claim and no medical evidence was provided to Comcare by the employee.
15. Medicare Australia's exit questionnaire does not record this level of detail. It only indicates if someone is resigning due to "medical reason".
16. None reported.
17. All 322 employees on AWAs are eligible to receive a performance bonus. Those who receive a performance rating of '3' or above are entitled to a bonus.

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18. (a) For the financial year ended 2003/2004, performance bonuses totalling \$1,831,888 were paid to eligible staff. For the year ended 2004/2005, bonus payments totalled \$1,393,138.

(b) Details of amounts paid per classification are outlined in the table below

<b>Classification</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>Total Paid</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>Total Paid</b>
SES Band 1-3	50	453,974	49	308,901
Medical Advisor Class 3-5	24	154,300	26	103,521
Legal Officers	3	28,400	4	20,978
EL2	151	793,008	144	586,648
EL1	92	400,106	98	372,224
APS 6	3	2,100	2	866
<b>Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>\$1,831,888</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>\$1,393,138</b>

(c) In accordance with Medicare Australia policy\*, eligible employees are assessed for a performance bonus in accordance with the following 5 point rating scale:

<b>Performance Assessment/ Outcome</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Bonus Payment (% of salary)</b>
The employee has met and exceeded expectations in all essential performance goals.	5	10-12%
The employee has met all essential performance goals and exceeded expectations in one or more, but not all.	4	6-9%
The employee has met all essential performance goals.	3	2-5%
One of the employee's essential performance goals is assessed as not met.	2	Nil
More than one of the employee's essential performance goals is assessed as not met.	1	Nil

\* Note that some employees have alternative bonus provisions in terms of payment prescribed in their individual AWAs: