

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—October 2010

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Workplace Bullying**

Question: **P 8**

Written **Senator Siewert**

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 3 December 2010**

- a) How many incidents of workplace bullying or intimidation have been reported each year for the past five years?
- b) How many people have resigned or left the Department due to workplace bullying?
- c) What programs are in place within the Department to provide assistance to staff that have reported, resigned or left due to bullying?
- d) What is the uptake of those programs?
- e) How many disciplinary actions have been undertaken in response to workplace bullying?

#### Answer

- a) Records over the last five years show that 47 individuals indicated in their DPS exit interview survey that they had experienced or observed workplace harassment, bullying or discrimination in the workplace. Of these, 21 said that, at the time, they had reported it to a DPS Harassment Contact Officer, their supervisor, senior officer and/or spoke to the DPS EAP. The breakdown of these figures is in the table below.

2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
6	5	5	5	0

Some issues may be dealt with / resolved informally within a section and, so, go no further. Some issues are reported in confidence to Harassment Contact Officers and/or discussed with the DPS Employee Assistance Provider (EAP). Every effort is made to follow up reports appropriately, taking into consideration the policy guidance from the Australian Public Service Commission, including advice on behaviours that are not harassment or bullying. The nature of the follow-up action takes into consideration whether the claim is about a supervisor, work colleague or subordinate.

- b) Of the 568 employees who have left DPS since July 2005, 196 (34.51%) have participated in the department's voluntary exit interview process. Five employees indicated in exit interviews that workplace harassment / bullying was an influencing factor in their decision to leave DPS.

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- c) DPS has an Occupational Health and Safety policy: OHS Paper No.6— *Workplace Harassment/Bullying*, which outlines the procedures for reporting workplace harassment and bullying.

DPS has a network of trained Harassment Contact Officers to whom DPS employees may speak at any time.

DPS offers departing employees a voluntary exit interview. Employees can choose to have a face-to-face discussion with a representative from HR Services or complete an exit questionnaire.

DPS provides an Employee Assistance Service to all employees and a *ManagerAssist* program to all DPS supervisors.

- d) Exit Interviews: 43 participants (29%) in 2009–10.

Employee Assistance Provider: 5% uptake rate in 2009–10.

- e) One employee was investigated during 2007 for his workplace behaviour and was found to have breached the Parliamentary Service Code of Conduct in that he did not treat a fellow employee with respect and courtesy.