

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—October 2011

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Comcare survey
Question: 30
Hansard reference F&PA p.32, 17 October 2011

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 December 2011

Senator MOORE: I am still trying to find out whether, before the survey started, there was a meeting engaging the management team, or whoever, from your area and Comcare to have a general discussion about your views about how things were going, what you were hoping to get to, any kinds of comments you would have—whether there was a benchmark or some discussion at the start before the survey that could then be useful at the end of the survey when you got your feedback. Did that happen?

Ms Sheppard: I understand there was discussion with the HR services team and Comcare, but, to my knowledge, not directly with management and Comcare.

Senator MOORE: Is there anyone from the HR services team that can tell me whether that did happen?

Ms Sheppard: We will have to find out and get back to you, if that is okay.

Senator MOORE: Okay.

Answer

1 A meeting was held on 27 July 2011 between two Comcare representatives and the DPS Assistant Director OHS & Injury Management to discuss the Comcare Bullying Campaign. Comcare advised that an audit program was part of this campaign, and invited DPS to be one of 12 Commonwealth agencies to participate in that program during 2011–12.

2 Comcare advised that the audit was a two-stage process, involving:

- (a) a desktop audit of the systems DPS had in place to mitigate bullying and harassment; and
- (b) a staff survey, which would be benchmarked against the other participating agencies.

3 At a later stage, the survey would be re-run to assess whether there had been any change in each agency.

4 At the meeting, Comcare advised that the survey would involve 100 randomly chosen employees, and be held open for seven days. DPS asked Comcare if all employees of DPS could be offered the opportunity to participate in the survey, and if the survey could remain open for two weeks rather than seven days to allow for sessional and casual staff to participate. Comcare agreed to both requests.