

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

**Question No. 153**

**Senator Mason asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May 2006:**

- 1) With respect to the Family Court of Australia (the Body) in the last calendar year or financial year you have records for:
  - a) What is the total number of days of sick leave and unscheduled leave taken by the Body's employees?
  - b) Over the same period, what was the average number of days of sick leave and unscheduled leave taken per Full Time Equivalent employee of the Body?
- 2) What is the sick leave entitlement allowable to the employees of the Body as part of the terms of their employment (under the Certified Agreement or individual contracts)?
- 3) Does the Body monitor and review the employees' use of sick leave entitlement? Has this procedure changed in the past 12 months?
- 4) What initiatives, if any, has the Body undertaken in the past three years to address absenteeism?

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

1. Leave taken over the last Calendar year (2004 and 2005):

	<b>2004 (as at 31.12.2004)</b>	<b>2005 (as at 31.12.2005)</b>
<b>Sick leave (Total)</b>	6052.4	3749.9
<b>Other unscheduled leave (Total)</b>	1583	2731.7

	<b>2004 (as at 31.12.2004)</b>	<b>2005 (as at 31.12.2005)</b>
<b>Sick leave taken per FTE</b>	8.8	5.3
<b>Unscheduled days per FTE</b>	2.3	3.9

Significantly, the Court has recorded no psychological injuries over the past 12 months.

2. The sick leave entitlement under the Court's current Certified Agreement is 20 days per year.
3. The use of sick leave entitlement is monitored by the Court's Human Resources team and the relevant Registry Managers. This monitoring is reported to the Court Management Group monthly/quarterly, and reports are provided to Registry Managers to monitor absenteeism. In addition, the HR team monitors sick or unscheduled leave that is greater than six days.
4. The Court's initiatives to address absenteeism over the past three years are:
  - a. The introduction of the Court's Wellbeing policies and procedures;
  - b. The current Certified Agreement (2005-2007) states measures that may be taken in individual cases;
  - c. The current Certified Agreement (2005-2007), states that medical certificates must be provided for sick leave in excess of six days in each accrual year where medical evidence has not been provided;
  - d. Working closely with Comcare to reduce absenteeism associated with compensation cases; and
  - e. Promoting Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to all employees.

Additionally, to assist in promoting a healthy workplace, the Court has invested in the following initiatives:

- Influenza shots for staff who wish to receive annual influenza vaccinations;
- Eyesight testing and reimbursement for prescribed eyesight correction to all staff using screen-based equipment;
- Reimbursement for the cost of Quit Smoking programs for staff; and
- Workplace ergonomic assessments has been conducted for staff in all registries.