

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 23 MAY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE11/0012) Program: Portfolio Tribunals (MRT-RRT)

Senator Boyce (L&CA written) asked:

25% were delayed because, and I quote, “the absence of a tribunal member due to illness or other reason”. Is this not a very high absentee rate, way above a reasonable average level of sick leave in any organisation?

Answer:

Reviews took longer than 90 days predominantly for 'other' reasons rather than illness. Part time members are not entitled to sick leave whereas full time members are. However, member absences for illness are not high. They are well below, for example, median levels for personal leave across the APS as reported in the State of the Service report.

With their terms ending on 30 June 2010, 21 members did not seek reappointment or were not reappointed for a further term. Cases which those members were not able to complete before their appointment expired were reallocated to other members, and this resulted in delays in many cases. If the new member considered that it was a reason that contributed to the case taking more than 90 days to decide, the member would have identified the original member's unavailability as a reason.