

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12-229

OUTCOME 0: Whole of Portfolio

Topic: Access and Equity

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 1

Senator: Senator Di Natale

Question:

What is the Department doing to ensure it has a culturally competent workforce?

Answer:

The Department of Health and Ageing is currently undertaking a range of activities aimed at ensuring that it has a diverse and culturally aware workforce. These activities are delivered via targeted workforce action plans and include:

- attraction and recruitment strategies to position the department as an employer of choice for people from diverse backgrounds;
- targeted recruitment campaigns, such as the recent engagement of seven APS1 staff with disability and the participation of the department in programs aimed at providing enhanced employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- participation in APS-wide programs and strategies, such as the 'as one' Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy;
- retention strategies to maintain workforce diversity;
- providing support to ensure that all staff are supported in their career aspirations and availability of development opportunities;
- establishment of and support for staff support networks;
- membership with advocacy groups, such as the Australian Network on Disability;
- departmental support and promotion of days of significance, festivals and events;
- providing training, information sessions and advice to staff and managers to help build and maintain a culture of support and inclusion within the department; and
- development and delivery of specific training, such as the department's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness Training. The training will be mandatory for new staff and current staff will also be encouraged to participate, with completion of the training will be considered as part of staff member's Performance Development Scheme discussions.

The activities delivered under these workforce plans are supported by departmental policies and initiatives, such as the Department's RESPECT initiative, that aim to build a positive organisational culture and work environment for staff.