

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 22 OCTOBER 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Medicare Serious Non-compliance Unit

Question reference number: HS 19

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Hansard pages 121-122

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 December 2015

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Senator CAMERON: How many people are working in the Medicare serious noncompliance unit?

Ms Campbell: We have made some changes recently with the machinery of government arrangements—or this is about to occur—where the provider compliance will go to the Department of Health and the citizen/client/customer compliance will remain with the Department of Human Services.

Senator CAMERON: During the period of these alleged high incidences of fraud, how many people were working in the Medicare serious noncompliance unit in DHS?

Mr Sandison: I will have to take that on notice, specifically as to the serious fraud noncompliance—

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- b) Senator CAMERON: Were the numbers reduced in that serious noncompliance unit?

Mr Sandison: There were changes in the unit about how we managed the workload and how we managed the control of the information.

Senator CAMERON: Have they been reduced from 30 to six?

Mr Sandison: I do not think that would be the case, but I will check what the numbers are.

- c) Senator CAMERON: Was correspondence received from the head of that unit, requesting more resources to deal with serious fraud and allegations of fraud?

Mr Sandison: There were discussions with the acting head of that unit about the nature of the resource base for the team and the capacity of the team to deal with some of the work, and we made some changes to it.

Senator CAMERON: So can you provide me with all file notes and correspondence in relation to those discussions, and any file notes and any correspondence in relation to the reduction of the numbers in the health compliance unit?

Mr Sandison: I will take that on notice.

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d) Senator CAMERON: Were there any redundancies in that area?

Mr Sandison: No, not that I am aware of.

Senator CAMERON: Can you check for me?

Mr Sandison: I can check, certainly.

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e) Senator CAMERON: Tell me about it. How many have been redeployed?

Mr Sandison: I do not have the numbers.

Senator CAMERON: Could that be from 30 down to six?

Mr Sandison: I would have to check. Again, I cannot give you a number or I would be correcting it immediately, I am sure.

Answer:

- a) As at 31 October 2015, prior to the transfer of health provider compliance to the Department of Health, the Serious Non-Compliance Unit (SNCU) had 33 staff members.
- b) The number of staff working in SNCU has not reduced to six.
- c) Yes, advice on the need for more resources was received and additional staff were provided to the team.
- d) There were no redundancies in the 2014-15 financial year or since.
- e) No staff were re-deployed.