

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates May 2017

Communications Portfolio

Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner

Question No: 147

Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner

Hansard Ref: Page 5, 25/05/2017

Topic: Staff Roles

Senator O'Neill, Deborah asked:

Senator O'NEILL: Of your 37 ASL, how many were formerly dedicated to work with children?

Ms Inman-Grant: I do not have the answer to that question.

Ms Vassiliadis: The majority of the staff that we had prior to the recent expansion had a diverse range of roles. But the majority dealt with providing and developing online safety resources for children.

Senator O'NEILL: The majority being how many?

Ms Vassiliadis: I would say 80 per cent.

Senator O'NEILL: On notice, could you indicate the roles that were undertaken prior to the change of focus. I have to say it is a concern. I do not think that children's needs with regard to the internet are decreasing, and you are being asked to do a whole lot more. I think there are issues that we need to keep an eye on here around resourcing and capacity. The need is great, and response capacity needs to be there. It would be a shame if children were to miss out on support, as needy as other sectors of our community are. Is that clear? Can you give me the old roles, the new roles and who is in what. How did you source your 23 contractors?

Ms Inman-Grant: I think through a range of—

Ms Vassiliadis: Predominantly through a recruitment panel.

Answer:

The Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner (OCeSC) was established on 1 July 2015, commencing with an average staff level (ASL) of 31, complemented by 10 contractors. The functions of all staff and contractors on commencement of the OCeSC were dedicated to Children's online safety functions. These functions included providing online safety education and resources aimed at children; administration of a complaints service for Cyberbullying; administration of the Online Content scheme; and managing the voluntary certification scheme for providers of online safety programs in Australian Schools.

At April 30, 2017, total OCeSC staff numbered 60, comprising an ASL of 37, complemented by 23 contractors. Approximately 80%, or 48 staff remain dedicated to Children's online safety functions. The remaining staff are dedicated towards new programs where additional funding has been provided. These programs include the Womens Safety Package (eSafety Women); National Plan to reduce Violence against Women and their Children (Image Based Abuse initiative); and the Digital Literacy for Older Australians program.

The OCeSC contractors were all sourced through procurement panels in accordance with the relevant Commonwealth Procurement Rules.