

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015

Outcome: Cross Portfolio - Corporate

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000014

Senator Carr, Kim asked on 25 February 2015, Hansard page 16.

Higher Education call centre

Question

Ms Paul: ... We can take on notice when the campaign is finished how much was actually spent.

Senator KIM CARR: How many people are employed in the call centre?

Ms Paul: I do not know. We will have to take that on notice. I think through the shared services centre we contract out for a whole lot of different lines.

Senator KIM CARR: But you have been allocated \$500,000, so you must be able to give us an indication of how many people have been employed in this call centre.

Ms Paul: They are the people who have always been employed to answer higher education questions. I will take it on notice.

Senator KIM CARR: How much do you pay the call centre on an annual basis?

Ms Paul: I have no idea. I'll take it on notice.

Senator KIM CARR: What other work do they do for you?

Ms Paul: I will take that on notice, too. I am not completely sure. I think we have always had, in every iteration, a contact centre or we have outsourced to contact centres.

Senator KIM CARR: So you should be able to tell me how much you spend on that if it has been long established.

Ms Paul: Yes, we will.

Senator KIM CARR: The 134 calls that you have received, from what dates does that occur?

Ms Gleeson: It is over the period of the campaign.

Senator KIM CARR: So give me the dates, please.

Ms Gleeson: I will take that on notice.

Senator KIM CARR: What is the nature of the calls?

Ms Paul: We would definitely have to take that on notice. I do not think we would have that with us. I am happy to do so.

Senator KIM CARR: What, they were people ringing up complaining about the Labor Party, were they?

Ms Paul: I am happy to take it on notice.

Senator Birmingham: I get plenty of those sorts of calls, Senator.

Senator KIM CARR: Yes, but you don't get paid \$500,000.

Ms Paul: They won't have been paid \$500,000. That is the budget.

Senator KIM CARR: How much have you spent to date on the call centre?

Ms Paul: I will take that on notice.

Answer

As at 25 February 2015 the call centre had a total of 84 agents (63 FTE). There are no staff dedicated to responding to higher education communication campaign questions – existing staff are trained to respond to a range of queries.

The call centre handles customer contacts received via telephone, email and web chat on behalf of the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Employment.

Approximately \$3.5 million is spent on call centre services per year for Department of Education and Training and Department of Employment.

A total of 59,228 calls (both education and employment related) were received by the call centre over the course of the campaign (7 December 2014 to 14 February 2015). The call centre received a total of 134 calls directly relevant to the content of the campaign during the campaign period.

As at 25 February 2015 call centre costs for the campaign were \$6179.00 (excluding GST) which includes call costs totalling approximately \$1379.