

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017**

Outcome: Agency: ACARA

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000053

Senator O'Neill, Deborah asked on 01 March 2017, Proof Hansard page 33

ACARA - forward plan for workplace culture and performance management

Question

Mr Randall: The short answer is: yes, I was surprised that it was there. I have talked with the staff group about it; I have talked with the executive about it. The staff group in particular are working through actions, which starts at a common understanding of these things, differentiating between what sometimes might be called bullying and harassment; if we went back to the previous discussion it might be called some negative feedback about work and the like. What we have agreed to though is that it has been raised, and I am surprised about it. We need to address it in a constructive way.

Senator O'NEILL: I would be very concerned if the term 'bullying' were redefined to disappear—

Mr Randall: I am not planning on doing that.

Senator O'NEILL: I am sure that your staff will let you know. Just out of interest, could you provide an indication of the forward plan with regard to workplace culture and performance management that the staff are engaging in. I would be very interested to see what you are doing.

Mr Randall: I started reading at the high level, and this is what the staff have identified. So I might finish that off. If you want more, I would be happy to provide it.

Senator O'NEILL: On notice?

Mr Randall: Yes. I will take it on notice then.

Senator O'NEILL: That would be great. Could you also provide a readable comparative analysis of the two sets of data. We have the 2011 base and then the 2016. Have you done that? Have you compared the two, like with like?

Mr Randall: Qualitatively we have; quantitatively we cannot, because we changed—and that was an agreement we took to make it a more simplified process so that we can do it more regularly instead of engaging an external provider, which complicates it. But we can provide you some qualitative—

Senator O'NEILL: Thank you very much. I am sure there would be some parts where there will be some similarities, so if you could provide as much detail as you can.

Mr Randall: Sure.

Answer

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA) has provided the following response:

Please refer to the response provided to SQ17-000328 for a readable comparative analysis of the two sets of data from the 2011 and 2016 staff surveys.

With regard to ACARA's forward plan for enhancing workplace culture and performance management, ACARA has formed an employee representative group (ERG) tasked with making recommendations to address areas of concern identified in ACARA's 2016 Staff Climate Survey including workplace culture and performance management. The ERG has developed an Action Plan so that the themes identified in the survey can be positively actioned. Recommendations will be presented to ACARA's executive by the end of April 2017.

Proposals under consideration in the Action Plan to improve the agency's capacity to improve workplace culture include:

- Review current procedures, policies, resources and support strategies
- Provision of professional learning for all staff
- Follow-up survey.

Proposals under consideration in relation to performance management include:

- More regular performance related conversations with staff as part of the annual appraisal process
- More attention to manager performance
- Identification of parts of the existing performance management process that can be improved.