

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

Question No. 15

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 16 October 2012:

Senator HUMPHRIES: You mentioned that there was a heavy emphasis on boots on the ground in this service. I assume with a higher workload and in most areas a reduction in the number of staff actually available to assist in dealing with those workloads that there would potentially be greater stress on staff. Has there been any increase in reports of stress leave or other stress related indicators within the service?

Mr Pezzullo: I see that data periodically, but I just cannot recall it off the top of my head. I might just take that on notice.

Senator HUMPHRIES: All right. Would you say that morale was good in Border Protection Command at the moment?

Mr Pezzullo: Given the challenges that they face and the heavy load that we are placing on Border Protection Command, I would say that the morale there is very good.

Senator HUMPHRIES: That is sort of a qualified answer.

Mr Pezzullo: Relative to the pressures that probably is true. They are working hard, Senator, and they know that they are doing a vitally important job in terms of protecting our border sovereignty. It is hard work. In any sphere of endeavour when you are working hard and you are tired it can focus the mind. But they are very resilient and we pay particular attention to the stresses and strains that they face. We will get the answer to you in terms of your previous question on any claims for stress or any instances of stress that they have provided. I would rather give you a fact based answer on that.

Senator HUMPHRIES: Sure. I would appreciate information for, say, the present financial year to date and the last two financial years.

Mr Pezzullo: We will take that on notice.

Senator HUMPHRIES: Thank you.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

There has not been an increase in stress related claims based on data from the last two financial years.

For the 2010/2011 financial year there were 13 stress claims approved by Comcare.

For the 2011/2012 financial year there were 9 stress claims approved by Comcare.

For the 2012/13 financial year to 30 September, there have been 3 stress claims approved by Comcare.