

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

DESIGN, SCOPE, COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS, CONTRACTS AWARDED AND IMPLEMENTATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE BETTER MANAGEMENT OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM INITIATIVE

PUBLIC HEARING 26 APRIL 2017

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Staff Consultation

Question reference number: QoN 173

Member: Senator Bilyk

Type of question: Hansard page 54

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 May 2017

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator BILYK: How many of the staff officially involved with the work associated with the OCI programs were consulted with prior to the implementation? Are you able to tell us?

Mr Hutson: I will take that on notice.

Senator BILYK: If you could, tell us what the discussion or consultation program was exactly, the dates, the venues, who was able to attend and how staff were actually consulted with prior to the rollout.

Answer:

In accordance with the Department's practice of continuous improvement, staff input and feedback was used to support the development of the online compliance system.

Initially, this approach was piloted in three phases from May to July 2015 with around 200 staff across five compliance sites undertaking the activity. These compliance sites were Caboolture (QLD), Hamilton (VIC), Adelaide (SA), Maitland (NSW) and Wyong (NSW).

Subject Matter Experts provided extensive on-site technical support to the staff undertaking this new work for the entirety of the pilot. This support included answering staff questions, gathering feedback from staff and recording compliance outcomes. Throughout the pilot, an ongoing process of review was undertaken to allow stakeholders the opportunity to discuss issues and provide further feedback.

Based on feedback from staff and stakeholders throughout the pilot, the process was refined and rolled out to other compliance sites. Subject Matter Experts were again made available to support staff and to gather any feedback during the rollout.

Over 100,000 compliance interventions were completed by approximately 300 staff using this new process in 2015-16.

In July and August 2016 the process was piloted in the online compliance system for 1000 people. The pilot was undertaken by compliance staff and feedback from staff was used in improving the system.

The feedback from staff has been used in an ongoing way to inform a range of enhancements to the online compliance system. This ensured that the Department's consultation and continuous improvement was based on real-time and ongoing engagement with staff and stakeholders involved in the process.

As with all our systems and processes, the Department is constantly refining how it operates. Feedback from staff is a key part of this process as it provides insight into how our processes work in practice, particularly from the customer's perspective. In February 2017 a range of system enhancements were released to make it easier for people to navigate the system. Some of the key improvements including a new login option for customers, and a new tile on the DHS website with general information about the online compliance system – were developed in response to suggestions from compliance staff.