

Select Committee on Job Security
Answers to questions on notice
Agriculture, Water and the Environment Portfolio

Inquiry: Senate Select Committee on Job Security
Question No: IQ21-000017
Division/Agency: People Division
Topic: Questions on notice - Labour hire/ contractors
Question Date: 31 March 2021
Question Type: Written

The Senate Select Committee on Job Security asked:

1. What number and percentage of your department/agency's workforce are labour hire?
2. What number and percentage of your department/agency's workforce are contractors?
3. Which companies does your department/agency have contracts with for the procurement of labour hire and/or contract employees, and what is the value of those contracts?
4. The extent to which labour hire and contractors are for seasonal or temporary work and how this changes over the course of a year?
5. What guidelines are in place covering the procurement of these labour hire services?
6. What guidelines are in place covering the procurement of these contractor services?
7. What consultants or other recruitment services are used to procure these workers, the cost of these services and the companies providing them?
8. Provide a breakdown of the number of labour hire workers and contractors engaged in each state and territory.

Answer:

1. The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's human resource information systems are not configured to distinguish between contractors procured through labour hire firms and other contractors and vendors.
2. On 31 January 2021 there were 967 contractors working for the department, which is approximately 11.9% of the department's workforce, noting that the number of contractors will fluctuate regularly due to seasonal variation.
3. Labour hire and/or contract employee's contracts are listed under the category of temporary personnel on AusTender and include the supplier and contract value. The contractor budget for the 2020-21 mid-year financial review is \$187,653,569. The mid-year financial review budget comprises the actual expenditure for the first seven months of the financial year and the estimated expenditure for the remaining five months.
4. The external workforce fluctuates throughout the year when:
 - there is a need to acquire specialist expertise or undertake independent research review or assessment for a short to medium term basis
 - specialist capability is not available on an ongoing basis, such as within the information technology industry where the market for skills is more readily available on a contract basis
 - a surge in demand is temporary and contractors represent a more efficient way to secure labour quickly
 - there is a need to backfill APS staff who are on long term leave or where there is a temporary vacancy, and it is not appropriate to backfill on a permanent basis.
5. The department has an internal labour hire policy that is consistent with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and related policies, including the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.

6. See answer for Question 5.
7. Labour hire workers are engaged directly from suppliers. Labour hire contracts are listed under the category of temporary personnel on AusTender and include the supplier and contract value.
8. Table 1 shows the number of contractors located in each state and territory.

Table 1: Number of contractors located in each state and territory.

State/Territory	Total
ACT	898
NSW	12
VIC	15
QLD	9
SA	1
WA	1
TAS	26
NT	5
Grand Total	967