

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Program: Australian Human Rights Commission

Question No. SBE16/022

Senator Siewert asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2016:

Senator SIEWERT: In the time remaining to me, I would like to ask Mr McEwin some questions. Could I start with the number of complaints—and it may be a question for Professor Triggs—you are receiving in terms of disability. I am interested in the numbers that relate to workplace discrimination or issues to do with employment of people with disability.

Mr McEwin: I will hand over to Gillian in a minute, but what I can say is that complaints on the basis of disability discrimination continue to be the highest amongst all the complaints that we receive, and employment also is amongst the highest.

Prof. Triggs: This has always been a consistent feature of the work of the commission on complaints. I know you have been following this for many years. Two-thirds of our complaints across the commission concern employment or the delivery of goods and services, and that is reflected also in the disability discrimination statistics. The most recent I have are that employment for those with disabilities constitutes 35 per cent of the complaints, and, with regard to goods, services and facilities, 33 per cent. So you can see that we get to 68, which pretty much reflects the kind of balance we have had in the complaints work of the commission for a number of years.

Senator SIEWERT: Is that remaining at approximately the same levels? You have seen a decrease?

Prof. Triggs: No, it is not decreasing at all. Again, if I may, I will take it on notice to give you a fuller set of those figures.

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

Consistently, across the past five years, the majority of complaints received by the Commission are lodged under the DDA. In the 2015-2016 reporting year 37% of all complaints received by the Commission raised allegations under the DDA (compared with 31% in 2014-2015 and 38% in 2013-2014). The main areas of complaint under the DDA are in the areas of employment and goods, services and facilities – the graph below illustrates the comparative consistency over the past five reporting years.

Percentage of DDA complaints received in the areas of employment and provision of goods, services and facilities over the past 5 years

