

Question on notice no. 3

Portfolio question number: SQ18-000694

2018-19 Supplementary budget estimates

Education and Employment Committee, Education and Training Portfolio

Senator the Hon. Jacinta Collins: asked the Department of Education and Training on 25 October 2018—

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: I think I've got their updates, but I'd have to ask them the specifics, which I can do on notice. So did any of these staff return to the department earlier than was originally planned? Presumably the one week? Usually there are a minimum number of weeks that what you're calling interim adviser would be placed for. Mr Markovic: I'd need to take that on notice. I haven't got anything in my records in terms of why they returned. The DLOs we would ordinarily replace. As one DLO comes out, we ensure that there's a DLO up with an office, which would be normal practice. In relation to the interim advisers, it's my understanding that those officers were there for short-term periods to cover absences in Minister Andrews's office. But I would need to take that question on notice. Senator JACINTA

COLLINS: Dr Bruniges might be able to help you. I'm pretty confident there's a minimum placement period for adviser substitutes. Dr Bruniges: I think you're right, Senator. I would have to take that on notice. But it may be that an existing DLO is on rec leave. So we'd need to look into the records of each one, and if someone was on rec leave for a week we would sometimes put a substitute up, depending on the work volume. So, I think, as Mr Markovic has said, we'd need to have a look at the records of the individual officers and ascertain the reasons for any of those shorter period.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: But what we're talking about here isn't a DLO; this is an interim adviser. Dr Bruniges: Yes, we would have had one interim adviser for one week, which Mr Markovic has said, from 20 August 2018 to 27 August 2018, but the reason for that we would need to take that on notice. Senator JACINTA COLLINS: You don't know that reason?

Answer —

See attachment.

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2018 - 2019

Outcome: Cross Portfolio

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ18-000694

Senator Jacinta Collins asked on 25 October 2018, Proof Hansard page 8

Staff in Assistant Ministers Office

Question

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: I think I've got their updates, but I'd have to ask them the specifics, which I can do on notice. So did any of these staff return to the department earlier than was originally planned? Presumably the one week? Usually there are a minimum number of weeks that what you're calling interim adviser would be placed for.

Mr Markovic: I'd need to take that on notice. I haven't got anything in my records in terms of why they returned. The DLOs we would ordinarily replace. As one DLO comes out, we ensure that there's a DLO up with an office, which would be normal practice. In relation to the interim advisers, it's my understanding that those officers were there for short-term periods to cover absences in Minister Andrews's office. But I would need to take that question on notice.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Dr Bruniges might be able to help you. I'm pretty confident there's a minimum placement period for adviser substitutes.

Dr Bruniges: I think you're right, Senator. I would have to take that on notice. But it may be that an existing DLO is on rec leave. So we'd need to look into the records of each one, and if someone was on rec leave for a week we would sometimes put a substitute up, depending on the work volume. So, I think, as Mr Markovic has said, we'd need to have a look at the records of the individual officers and ascertain the reasons for any of those shorter period.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: But what we're talking about here isn't a DLO; this is an interim adviser.

Dr Bruniges: Yes, we would have had one interim adviser for one week, which Mr Markovic has said, from 20 August 2018 to 27 August 2018, but the reason for that we would need to take that on notice.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: You don't know that reason?

Answer

In regards to Interim Advisers, the *Ministers of State Entitlements Handbook* states (5.3.3 Relief Staff):

- When a personal employee is absent on approved leave for a period of 12 weeks or more, a person may be temporarily employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* to fill the vacancy. When a personal employee is on leave for a shorter period, the Minister's portfolio department is responsible for providing any relief required.

Employees of the Department of Education and Training working as Interim Advisers in the office of the Hon Karen Andrews MP returned to the department when temporary staff were no longer required.