

## Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

### ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 24 FEBRUARY 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Human Services Portfolio

**Topic:** Child Support Agency - Unions

**Question reference number:** HS 3

**Senator:** Fifield

**Type of question:** Hansard CA page 80

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 8 April 2011

**Number of pages:** 4

**Question:**

**Senator FIFIELD** - Given the stressful nature of the work, do you have any particular issues with excessive sick leave, absenteeism or—

**Ms Godwin** - We certainly have unplanned leave, of course, as do all agencies. I guess I could say that we would always prefer the unplanned leave to be lower than it is; but it is certainly a feature of the program as well.

**Senator FIFIELD** - Would that unplanned leave be higher throughout the CSA than, say, the core department or—

**Ms Godwin** - I would have to take that on notice. It fluctuates, of course. That is the other thing that happens: it fluctuates through the year, as it does in most agencies, around winter and those sorts of things.

**Senator FIFIELD** - Has any union that represents CSA staff sought right of entry to any CSA premises?

**Mr Dunn** - Specifically for CSA officers?

**Senator FIFIELD** - Given that you are multifaceted, let us ask about other agencies in the core department—

**Mr Dunn** - I will start off, but we might get more information. I am not too sure specifically about right of entry for CSA officers; we will find out about that.

**Senator FIFIELD** - Thank you.

**Mr Dunn** - But, under the existing industrial arrangements, the union does have right of entry and there are certain processes that we need to go through.

**Senator FIFIELD** - I am just curious about whether any unions have sought to avail themselves of those processes.

**Mr Dunn**—Yes; the CPSU has on several occasions.

**Senator FIFIELD** - To CSA sites?

**Ms Chapman** - The union, the CPSU, has requested right of entry on occasion in all of our agencies; I cannot tell you how many times in child support. But we have protocols that we have established with them. They follow those protocols and are granted right of entry, as appropriate.

**Senator FIFIELD** - Would you be able to take on notice, if you need to, the occasions, the reasons, the days that that has occurred and the agencies?

**Ms Chapman** - Certainly.

**Answer:**

To promote a professional and collaborative relationship between the Human Services Portfolio and the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), a set of access protocols and facilities arrangements for the CPSU in the Portfolio Agencies has been developed and agreed.

These protocols give effect to the Australian Public Service Bargaining Framework, and in particular Attachment C of that Framework. The protocols are not intended to reduce or restrict current union facilities or activity. Unless otherwise agreed, the CPSU's right of entry onto Commonwealth business premises will be regulated by the *Fair Work Act 2009* (the Act) and legislative instruments made under the Act, and will occur in accordance with the conditions of a valid entry notice.

In the interests of a cooperative relationship with the CPSU, portfolio managers can allow CPSU access to sites as long as operational requirements are taken into account. The CPSU contacts the local Senior Place Representative in order to seek access to a particular office.

Local arrangements are also encouraged under the protocols, and invitations may be extended to the CPSU to enter the premises without the need for a legislative Right of Entry notification. On these occasions, no formal record of entry is kept.

In most sites, regular meetings are held with local CPSU representatives and generally it is only when CPSU Organisers visit the site that a 'Right of Entry' is required.

Due to these local arrangements, precise data on the number of occasions the CPSU has availed itself of access to sites in the Child Support Agency (CSA) and across the portfolio is unavailable. However, where the information is available for the CSA it is included at Attachment A. Reasons for the visits are not always known, as the Act does not require the CPSU to provide the workplace with this information.

In 2011 the CPSU has been granted, nationally, Right of Entry to facilitate meetings in all offices in relation to our Service Delivery Reform agenda and Enterprise Bargaining discussions with all staff, and these are not included in the attached information.

<b>CSA OFFICE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
<b>Wollongong</b>	25/02/2010	Consultation Visit
	25/03/2010	Consultation Visit
	06/04/2010	Consultation Visit
	05/05/2010	Consultation Visit
	27/05/2010	Consultation Visit
	03/06/2010	Consultation Visit
	29/07/2010	Consultation Visit
	30/08/2010	Consultation Visit
	04/11/2010	Consultation Visit
	17/11/2010	Consultation Visit
	15/12/2010	Consultation Visit
<b>Geelong</b>	30/06/2010	No reason provided
	01/10/2010	No reason provided
<b>Brisbane</b>	Monthly – approximately nine visits to date	Site Consultative Forum
	Three Right of Entry notices dates not recorded	Consultation Visit
	Week beginning 28/03/2010	Better way to Bargain Campaign
	Three meetings, dates not recorded	Consultation Visit
<b>Woden</b>	No Right of Entry requests	-
<b>Belconnen</b>	No Right of Entry requests	-
<b>Melbourne</b>	01/06/2010	Establish bi-monthly meeting schedule
	17/06/2010	Better Way to Bargain Campaign
	27/07/2010	Newstarter Program
	28/07/2010	Better Way to Bargain Campaign
	19/08/2010	Bi-monthly meeting
	23/08/2010	Lunchtime discussion with members
	31/08/2010	Lunchtime discussion with members
	06/09/2010	Better Way to Bargain Campaign
	09/09/2010	Better Way to Bargain Campaign
	14/10/2010	Better Way to Bargain Campaign
	21/10/2010	Better Way to Bargain Campaign
	27/10/2010	Better Way to Bargain Campaign
	28/10/2010	Bi-monthly meetings
	24/11/2010	Newstarter Program
16/12/2010	Bi-monthly meetings	
<b>Parramatta</b>	13/10/2010	New Delegates
	09/10/2010	Delegates Introduction
	01/09/2010	Consolidation of DHS/CSP
	19/07/2010	Delegates Meeting
	21/06/2010	Delegates Meeting
	09/06/2010	APS Cross Agency Delegate Meeting
	16/03/2010	Delegates Meeting

<b>CSA OFFICE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
<b>Townsville</b>	11/02/2010	Better Bargaining
<b>Albury</b>	07/10/2010	Consultation visit
	06/07/2010	Consultation visit
	02/06/2010	Consultation visit
	30/04/2010	Consultation visit
	18/02/2010	Consultation visit
<b>Adelaide</b>	Regular lunch meetings - no dates kept	Consultation Meetings
	25/05/2010	No reason given
<b>Newcastle</b>	17/09/2010	No reason given
	06/10/2010	No reason given
	08/12/2010	No reason given
<b>Perth</b>	No Right of Entry requests	-
<b>Hobart</b>	13/09/2010	Lunch time meeting
	22/09/2010	CPSU delegate meeting
	14/10/2010	CPSU delegate meeting