

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 26 FEBRUARY 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Enterprise Agreement Bargaining

Question reference number: HS 17

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Hansard page 42

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 April 2015

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator CAMERON: Can you provide me, on notice, details of your productivity measures that you are looking at? How those productivity measures can be affected by the staff is on notice. I want you to delineate cost cutting from real productivity. Can you give me your definition of productivity?

Ms Campbell: We will give you the definition according to the Australian government framework. We will provide you the information as per that framework.

Answer:

Definition of productivity

Genuine productivity gains are defined by the Australian Government Public Sector Workplace Bargaining Policy (Section 3.1.3) as demonstrable, permanent improvements in the effectiveness, efficiency and/or output of employees, based on the reform of work practices or conditions resulting in measurable savings. This does not include productivity savings arising from government initiatives or efficiency dividends, nor arbitrary reductions of staff.

Summary of measures

Productivity measures associated with the Department of Human Services remuneration proposal of 17 February 2015:

- increasing working hours from 37.5 hours to 38 hours per week;
- reducing the accrual of personal/carer's leave from 18 days to 15 days per year;
- maintaining a workforce profile target ratio of one Executive Level staff member to nine APS staff;
- changing the eligibility for higher duties allowance from no minimum period to periods greater than 10 continuous working days; and
- reducing preparation and pack up time for employees in scheduled environments from 15 minutes a day to 10 minutes per day.

How can productivity measures be affected by staff?

The department has provided staff the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed productivity measures throughout the bargaining process.

As a result, the department is now reviewing some of these productivity measures as part of the enterprise agreement negotiation process. In this way, employees have had an ongoing opportunity to affect the proposed productivity measures through the feedback they provide, which is considered by the department.

Overall, staff determine whether to accept the proposed agreement, and approved productivity improvements through a vote conducted in accordance with the *Fair Work Act 2009*.