

## Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

### BUDGET ESTIMATES – 3 JUNE 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Department of Human Services

**Topic:** Customer Aggression

**Question reference number:** HS 46

**Senator:** Cameron

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 24 July 2015

**Number of pages:** 3

#### **Question:**

I refer to HS 29 from Additional Estimates concerning customer aggression.

- a) How many incidents of customer aggression were reported in the month of March 2015, April 2015 and May 2015?
- b) How many incidents of customer aggression were reported in the financial years 2012-13 and 2011-12?
- c) How many duress alarm activations were there in the department in the period 1 July to 30 June in each of the years 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 (current)?
- d) How many customer aggression incidents did the department report to Comcare in the financial years 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 (current)?
- e) How many service restrictions were applied, broken into respective categories, in the financial years 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 (current)?
- f) Does the department require managers to report customer aggression incidents to the police?
- g) How many customer aggression incidents were reported to the police in the financial years 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 (current)?
- h) Does the department require managers to notify employee elected Health and Safety Representatives, elected means consistent with *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, of customer aggression incidents that occur in their respective work groups?
- i) Is it mandatory for staff to report customer aggression incidents they have experienced or witnessed? If not – why not?
- j) How many “customer management plans” were applied in the financial years 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 (current)?
- k) What strategies is the department using to reduce the number of customer aggression incidents occurring and to minimise the risk of injury to staff working in the department’s call centres?

- 1) Has the department commissioned external experts to investigate the causes and contributing factors to customer aggression incidents in the department? If so when and who conducted the research/investigation?

**Answer:**

- a) The number of customer aggression reports were:

- March 2015 – 776;
- April 2015 – 662; and
- May 2015 – 720.

More than one staff member may report a single incident of customer aggression.

- b) The number of customer aggression reports were:

- 2011-12 – 5,848; and
- 2012-13 – 7,507.

More than one staff member may report a single incident of customer aggression.

- c) The number of customer aggression reports where the reporter indicates that the duress alarm was used were:

- 2011-12 – 958;
- 2012-13 – 1,084;
- 2013-14 – 1,024; and
- 2014-15 (to 31 May 2015) – 913.

More than one staff member may report a single incident of customer aggression.

- d) The number of customer aggression incidents reported to Comcare were:

- 2011-12 - Reporting to Comcare is not available to the level that would allow the identification of a customer aggression incident from other incidents. New reporting processes were introduced from 2013-14;
- 2012-13 - as above;
- 2013-14 – one; and
- 2014-15 (to 31 May 2015) – two.

- e) The number of service restrictions by respective categories were:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b> (as at 31 May 2015)
Restricted to a one main contact	55	69	74
Directed to attend a nearby location	9	3	3
Restricted from face to face for up to 5 business days	273	635	697
Restricted from face to face and assigned a one main contact	372	235	200
Restricted phone service and assigned a one main contact	1	8	7
Restricted from face to face and phone so contact is by mail, email, fax, self-service or through a third party	66	40	17
Total number of customers with restricted servicing arrangement implemented	776	990	998

Customers with multiple restricted service arrangements implemented within a financial year are counted once against the highest level implemented. No data was collected in respect of service restrictions for 2011-12 as the system for collecting this data was implemented at a later date.

- f) Yes, where a criminal offence is believed to have been committed, a threat is made to commit a criminal offence or the workplace requires police support.
- g) The number of customer aggression reports where the reporter indicates police were involved were:
  - 2011-12 – 907;
  - 2012-13 – 1,031;
  - 2013-14 – 928; and
  - 2014-15 (to 31 May 2015) – 853.

More than one staff member may report a single incident of customer aggression.

- h) No. Customer aggression reports are sent to the People Team. A health and safety representative can obtain information on customer aggression incidents in a work group from the People Team.
- i) Yes. Staff who experience or witness a customer aggression incident are required to complete a customer aggression report when:
  - a customer's actions create an intimidating, frightening or offensive situation regardless of where, when or how it happens
  - a customer assaults or attempts to assault a person, including another member of the public in the workplace.
- j) Customer Management Plans were implemented from 1 April 2014. Data is collated each month as a point in time measure and as such a total number of customer management plans for the requested periods cannot be provided. As at 31 May 2015, there were a total of 759 people who had a customer management plan.
- k) The department's strategies to reduce the number of customer aggression incidents occurring and minimise the risk of injury to staff working in the department's call centres include:
  - de-escalation such as calling the customer back at later time;
  - transferring the call to a supervisor or recorded message;
  - warnings;
  - hanging up;
  - post incident support from a social worker, supervisor and employee assistance program;
  - restricted service arrangements;
  - IVR messaging; and
  - customer aggression training.

- l) Yes. DBM Consultants in May 2015.