

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES - 20 OCTOBER 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Laughter Works workshop

Question reference number: HS 2

Senator: Fifield

Type of question: Hansard pages 82-83

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 December 2011

Number of pages: 2

Question:

a) **Senator FIFIELD:** How many staff participated in the leadership workshop?

Ms Bennett: We will have to take that on notice.

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b) **Senator FIFIELD:** Thank you. Would you be able to provide a breakdown of the activities over the full leadership forum ...

c) but also take on notice—unless you can advise the committee now—the particular activities that Laughter Works undertook as part of the laughter yoga session?

Ms Bennett: Yes, I will.

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d) **Senator FIFIELD:** For the company Laughter Works, the laughter leader for the session apparently trained with the founder of the world laughter movement, Madan Kataria, and also — I assume that this is Mr Popp, the laughter leader — founded the South Yarra Laughter Club. Are you aware if any of these factors were important in Centrelink engaging Laughter Works as an organisation to undertake this icebreaking work?

Ms Bennett: If I could just clarify the question: you are asking if we were aware—

Senator FIFIELD: Was this background looked at, and did the Centrelink management of the day think, 'Well, that's terrific; we need an icebreaking session run by the founder of the South Yarra Laughter Club'?

Ms Bennett: I would have to take on notice the basis of how they were selected.

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e) **Senator FIFIELD:** What was the purpose of the leadership sessions over the day or two?

Ms Bennett: As I advised previously, I will have to look at the program and take that on notice.

f) **Senator FIFIELD:** Do you know who authorised this expenditure?

Ms Bennett: I will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

a) Approximately 100 staff.

- b), e) The leadership forum was developed to bring together two large, disparate management teams who were going to be working in much closer alignment than previously. As such, it was designed to build teamwork, develop a common understanding of the challenges which needed to be addressed both locally and organisationally and develop a plan for further action to meet those challenges.
- c) A range of activities to help build teamwork between two large, disparate management teams.
- d) This session was suggested by a Business Manager who had experienced a Laughter Works session at an industry conference she had recently attended.
- f) The expenditure was authorised by an Area Manager in the former Centrelink organisation.