

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 18 OCTOBER 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Social Media

Question reference number: HS 89

Senator: Boyce

Type of question: Written question

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 December 2012

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Has there been any changes to department and agency social media or protocols about staff access and usage of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since May 2012 Budget Estimates? If yes, please explain and provide copies of any advice that has been issued.
- b) Does the department/agency monitor usage of social media?
 - If yes, provide details of the usage (for example details could include average hours per employee, hours when usage peaks)
 - If no, will the department/agency monitor usage in the future?
- c) Does social media impact on employee productivity? Provide details (details could include increased internet usage in general or increased internet usage in standard business hours)

Answer:

- a) There has been no change in protocols in relation to staff access and usage of YouTube, online social media such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since May 2012 Budget Estimates. The Department released a Social Media Policy on 20 April 2011. It provides guidelines for staff on use of social media and making public comment online. The Department's policy reflects the principles outlined in the publication of the Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2012/1. In addition, the Department has a separate policy on making public comment, which also references social media.
- b) Only a limited number of staff have access to social media sites through the Human Services network and usage is logged and monitored, as is all internet usage. Incidents of suspected misuse are investigated and may be referred for disciplinary action, which can include formal investigation under the APS Code of Conduct.

- c) Staff only have access to these social media platforms through the Human Services network if it is required for work purposes. A small team is responsible for monitoring and managing the Department's social media presence. These staff have access to social media as part of this role. Further, a number of staff in both the Internal Fraud Control and Investigation Team and the Conduct Standards Team have access to social media sites for the purpose of investigating suspected misuse in line with their regular duties.