

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 18 OCTOBER 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Education Expenses

Question reference number: HS 107

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 a change to the department/agency's guidelines on study since the 2012-13 Budget Estimates (May 2012)? If yes, please provide details.
- b) For this financial year to date, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio department and agency. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, the employment classification of each participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant (provide a breakdown for each employment classification). Also include the reason for the study and how it is beneficial for the department/agency.
- c) For 2011-12, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio department and agency. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, the employment classification of each participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant (provide a breakdown for each employment classification). Also include the reason for the study and how it is beneficial for the department/agency.

Answer:

- a) There have been no changes to the Department's guidelines on study since the 2012-13 Budget Estimates (May 2012).
- b) The Department of Human Services education expenses for the financial year to date (i.e. 1 July 2012 to 31 October 2012) is \$4,081,486. This amount includes technical and skills based training for approximately 36,000 employees, which is essential to ensure they can deliver the Department's programs effectively. It also includes educational expenses linked to accredited learning and formal study leave. The range of courses offered include:
 - Compliance
 - Collection and debt
 - Customer service
 - Leadership
 - Participation program changes

- Customer payment training
- Corporate refresher training
- Operational and technical training
- Induction and orientation for new starters
- Public administration management
- Disability employment services program

For the financial year to date (1 July 2012 to 31 October 2012), 75,888 participants attended 960 courses. Course participation identifies the total number of attendees across all course delivery methods and can include web based learning, self-paced learning, facilitated and formal classroom training. An employee may have attended more than one course.

The information required to answer the question of cost per participant and employment classification per participant is not readily available. To prepare an answer would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.

For the financial year to date, a total of 472 employees utilised study leave for a total of 3,962 days. Study leave can include leave with full pay, leave without pay, including leave to count as service and leave not to count as service. The amount of study leave granted to a participant can vary and is not readily available. To obtain the information would be highly resource intensive and it would be difficult to justify the level of expenditure required to gather and report it.

Study is beneficial for the Department and undertaken for the purpose of equipping staff with the qualifications, knowledge and skills to perform a variety of service delivery, health, social welfare and support roles.

- c) The Department of Human Services education expenses for 2011-12 were \$18,791,557.

For the financial year 2011-12, a total of 374,123 participants attended 1,455 courses.

For the financial year 2011-12, a total of 719 employees utilised study leave for a total of 13,797 days.