

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 22 OCTOBER 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Job Provider Forms

Question reference number: HS 39

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 December 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) Is DHS aware of jobseekers being asked if they are in a trade union when they apply for assistance from Centrelink?
- b) Is DHS aware of any Job Providers like Max Solutions asking whether jobseekers are in a union? Does DHS require job providers to seek details of union membership?

Answer:

- a) The Department of Human Services does not ask for information from job seekers regarding their affiliation with trade unions as part of the standard new claim process for an income support payment. However, where a job seeker's unemployment results from industrial action, the Department is required to assess whether a 6 week exclusion period should be applied under section 500CC, 553A or 596 of the *Social Security Act 1991*. In those circumstances, the Department is required to collect information relating to the industrial action and the affiliation of the job seeker to the relevant trade union in order to determine whether there is a direct connection between the industrial action and the job seeker's unemployment.
- b) The Department of Human Services is not aware of the information that is collected by Employment Service Providers. The Department of Employment is responsible for managing the network of jobactive organisations.