

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates February 2017
Communications Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 75

Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Page 73, 28/02/2017

Topic: Work expenses reimbursement

Senator Abetz, Eric asked:

Senator ABETZ: It has been suggested to me that there have been reimbursements without proper receipts in Australia Post—that people are reimbursed for so-called work expenses without proper receipts, and that they were not followed up because of union interference.

Mr Fahour: I am not aware of that at all.

Senator ABETZ: Can you take that on notice and verify one way or the other?

Mr Fahour: Of course.

Senator ABETZ: I want to stress that these are simply allegations or assertions made, and I do not say that they are correct or incorrect, because I do not know. That is why I am asking the questions. Have any Australia Post payments been made to union officials and their family members—unrelated, of course, to any employment duties or obligations with Australia Post? Could you take that on notice please?

Mr Fahour: We will definitely follow up on that, and I would be pretty disappointed if the answer was yes under any circumstances, outside of their employment related to Australia Post.

Answer:

There have been a very small number of cases where reimbursements for legitimate workers' compensation costs have been made where there is no formal tax invoice or receipt however, in such cases, there is other supporting evidence of those costs being incurred.

The audit criteria used by Comcare to evaluate determinations made by Australia Post (as part of auditing our compliance with our self-insurance licence) is whether those determinations are “guided by equity, good conscience and the substantial merits of the case without regard to technicalities”. In Australia Post’s view, an approach that denied payments to injured workers solely on technical grounds, such as failure to have a formal tax invoice or receipt, would not be consistent with this criteria.

No payments have been made by Australia Post to union officials or their family members that were unrelated to employment duties or other obligations with Australia Post.