

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

26 February 2014

Question: AET 1740-1744

Topic: Public Debt Interest (ASIC)

Written: 07/03/2015

Senator BUSHBY asked:

According to MYEFO the net interest payments for debt held by the General Government Sector for the current financial year total \$8.8 billion, while the total interest cost is \$12.4 billion. Both figures rise to be \$12.8 billion and \$16.7 billion respectively in the final out-year.

1740. What would the Government be able to do with the equivalent amount of money in this portfolio if these billions were spent on programs and outcomes instead of on debt ?
1741. Does your agency ever observe connection between performance management of staff and claims of stress leave or other forms of sick leave?
1742. What is the number of staff on stress leave or psychological injury claims at any one time in your agency? How many harassment claims are there at any one time? How many of these cases are connected to performance cases? Have you observed any instances of stress claims and harassment claims being a tactic used by staff which the agency tries to performance-manage?
1743. Looking at the length of time claimed for sick leave, are you seeing longer absences for people with physical injuries or people claiming to have psychological injuries? What's the degree of difference?
1744. How much would be saved from your workforce insurance costs if you did not have the current levels of stress-related claims and other psychological injury claims?

Answer:

1740. It would not be appropriate for the agency to comment on such matters as future spend.
1741. ASIC does monitor the connection between performance management of staff and WHS claims or leave claims. This is monitored and managed.
1742. The number of active psychological injury workers compensation claims as at 1 July 2013 was seven and the number of active claims as at 28 February 2014 was seven. Over this period one claim was closed and one new claim was accepted by Comcare. Of these active psychological injury workers compensation claims, four have some connection to performance management.

During the period 1 July 2013 - 28 February 2014, there were 5 formal complaints made under our harassment and bullying policy and they were investigated in accordance with our policy and procedures. One of these complaints was connected to performance management.

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1743. The length of time away from work for psychological injuries is significantly higher than absences related to physical injuries. We do not have the data available to specifically quantify the degree of difference.
1744. We are unable to quantify the savings on our insurance premium if we did not have the current level of psychological injury claims. The workers compensation premium rate is a complex calculation that is impacted by the following four key factors;
- The number of claims at ASIC
 - The types and costs of claims at ASIC
 - The trends in the number, types and costs of all agencies combined
 - The total amount of money that Comcare needs to recover from all agencies