

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Budget Estimates

2014 - 2015

**Department/Agency: Reserve Bank of Australia**

**Question: BET 480 - 483**

**Topic: Departmental Dispute Resolution**

**Reference: written - 17 June 2015**

**Senator: Ludwig, Joe**

**Question:**

480. How are disputes between departmental and/or agency staff mediated?
481. Are any outside firms contracted to assist with this process? If yes: please list them, please include:
- a) The structure of payments made to each firm (e.g. retainers, fees for each consultation etc).
  - b) Amount paid to each firm since the last budget.
  - c) When the contract with the firm commenced.
  - d) When the contract with the firm will expire.
  - e) Why the firm was selected to provide the service.
  - f) Please provide a list of disputes referred to the firm, including a brief description of the dispute.
482. How are code of conduct violations by departmental and/or agency staff mediated?
483. Are any outside firms contracted to assist with this process? If yes: please list them, please include:
- a) The structure of payments made to each firm (e.g. retainers, fees for each consultation etc).
  - b) Amount paid to each firm since the last budget.
  - c) When the contract with the firm commenced.
  - d) When the contract with the firm will expire.
  - e) Why the firm was selected to provide the service.
  - f) Please provide a list of disputes referred to the firm, including a brief description of the dispute.

**Answer:**

480 The Reserve Bank has a Grievance Handling Guide for dealing with internal dispute issues. The Guide places primary responsibility on the immediate manager to act to resolve issues in the first instance, with escalation to senior management or the Human Resources Department where appropriate.

There are also formal Dispute Resolution processes within the Bank's Workplace Agreement, with access to arbitration by the Fair Work Commission where other forms of resolution have not been successful.

481 The Reserve Bank has not contracted outside firms to assist with the mediation of disputes between staff.

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- 482 The Reserve Bank's Code of Conduct outlines the Bank's approach to dealing with suspected and actual breaches of the Code. In general, the Bank will determine by reference to the circumstances of each case how to respond to a suspected or actual breach of the Code. Reported breaches are fully investigated, typically by the Human Resources Department but with the possibility of reference to an external independent investigator where it is warranted. Where a breach is found to have been substantiated, disciplinary action may be taken, taking into consideration procedural fairness and natural justice requirements. The Bank may also provide training, awareness and coaching to an individual or workgroup in response to a breach of the Code.

The Bank's Code of Conduct is available at: <http://www.rba.gov.au/about-rba/code-conduct-rba-staff.html>

- 483 Mediation between staff over Code of Conduct violations is dealt with by Reserve Bank staff rather than an outside firm.