

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

Cross Portfolio

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000046

Senator Cameron asked on 11 February 2016 on proof Hansard page 20

Question

Directions issued by the Public Service Commissioner

Ms Leon: The only direction that I am under—if you can call it that—is that I am bargaining within the framework of the bargaining policy. But in terms of directions from the Public Service Commissioner—I am happy to come back to you if I am incorrect about this—I do not believe there has been any new direction issued by Mr Lloyd since he became the commissioner, other than taking detail out of existing directions. For example, it used to be the case that, to appoint an SES officer, not only was the commissioner or his delegate, his representative, involved in the recruitment process but also, before I could appoint the officer, I had to send the recruitment papers to the commissioner, and the commissioner had to sign off on them. The commissioner has removed that requirement now and left it to secretaries to sign off that they have complied with the merit principle. So the current commissioner has removed some prescriptive material from directions, but I am fairly certain that there have not been any new directions, and I am happy to come back to you if I am wrong about that.

Senator CAMERON: The direction on the definition of productivity—

Ms Leon: That is not a direction.

Senator Cash: Chair, again, there seems to be some confusion.

Ms Leon: You asked me about the Public Service Commissioner's Directions, which are an instrument under the act, and which I would have to comply with.

Senator CAMERON: How do you describe, then, the policy that has been developed on productivity?

Ms Leon: It is the government's policy.

Senator Cash: That is just a framework, Senator Cameron. As your government—we put in place—

Senator CAMERON: It is not my government that screws workers, Minister; it is yours.

CHAIR: Senator Cameron, you are not being helpful.

Senator CAMERON: It is not my government that has ever screwed workers.

Senator Cash: a bargaining framework, so we are not going to direct the secretary to do anything other than, obviously, to bargain within the framework. The minister, regardless of who is sitting at this table, is not in charge of the content, and my understanding is that Mr Lloyd, in his capacity, also does not make directions in relation to content. The secretary has taken it on notice to ascertain whether or not there have been further directions issued, but the secretary's understanding is that to date Mr Lloyd has not issued a direction.

Answer

Since Mr Lloyd's appointment as the Australian Public Service Commissioner on 14 December 2014 there have been no new directions issued by the Australian Public Service Commission. There have been two amendments to the [Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2013](#) with effect 1 July 2015 and 30 November 2015.

Details of the amendments are available at www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/circulars-and-advice.