

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace  
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

**Agency - Comcare**

**DEEWR Question No. EW0064\_14**

**Senator Ludlam provided in writing.**

**Question**

**Comcare - ANSTO investigations**

1. Is ComCare undertaking any investigations on ANSTO currently? 2. How many ComCare claims are you processing from ANSTO personnel at the moment? 3. In the past ComCare have reported on the ANSTO nuclear facility and found that the nuclear facility had under-reported accidents and breached safety standards. Do you have any visibility of how recommendations made by the Independent review into your ComCare report in May 2011, are being implemented, for example are you satisfied that notifiable incidents are being reported to Comcare? a. engage a qualified person to conduct systematic monitoring of all workplaces that undertake radiopharmaceutical operations; b. direct a person with demonstrated competency in managing risks associated with hazardous substances to oversee an ongoing system of auditing to ensure radiopharmaceutical operations maintain appropriate systems of work to protect health and safety c. provide ongoing documented evidence to Comcare that systematic monitoring is occurring; regularly audit its consultative protocols with persons involved in radiopharmaceutical operations to ensure its policies and procedures are effectively carried out d. audit its record-keeping procedures to ensure appropriate information is recorded and retained in relation to the health and safety of employees engaged in radiopharmaceutical operations, and e. ensure that notifiable incidents are reported to Comcare

**Answer**

*Comcare has provided the following response.*

**1. Is Comcare undertaking any investigations on ANSTO currently?**

As at 24 October 2013, there are 2 investigations underway in relation to ANSTO. These investigations relate to the storage of chemicals.

**How many Comcare claims are you processing from ANSTO personnel at the moment?**

In the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 Comcare received 15 claims for compensation from ANSTO workers.

In the period 1 July 2013 to 23 October 2013 Comcare received 1 claim for compensation from ANSTO workers.

**2. In the past Comcare have reported on the ANSTO nuclear facility and found that the nuclear facility had under-reported accidents and breached safety standards. Do you have any visibility of how recommendations made by the Independent review into your Comcare report in May 2011, are being implemented, for example are you satisfied that notifiable incidents are being reported to Comcare?**

- a. engage a qualified person to conduct systematic monitoring of all workplaces that undertake radiopharmaceutical operations;
- b. direct a person with demonstrated competency in managing risks associated with hazardous substances to oversee an ongoing system of auditing to ensure radiopharmaceutical operations maintain appropriate systems of work to protect health and safety;
- c. provide ongoing documented evidence to Comcare that systematic monitoring is occurring; regularly audit its consultative protocols with persons involved in radiopharmaceutical operations to ensure its policies and procedures are effectively carried out;
- d. audit its record-keeping procedures to ensure appropriate information is recorded and retained in relation to the health and safety of employees engaged in radiopharmaceutical operations; and
- e. ensure that notifiable incidents are reported to Comcare .

Comcare uses a number of mechanisms to ensure improved Work Health and Safety (WHS) systems and practices are in place in ANSTO. These include:

- A Memorandum of Understanding which is in place with the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Science Agency (ARPANSA), the regulator of radiological safety. This MOU provides for cross referral for any WHS system issues and radiological spills which ANSTO are required to notify to ARPANSA. This enables both Comcare and ARPANSA to ensure regulatory compliance of ANSTO.
- Audits - a hazardous chemical audit was undertaken at ANSTO in 2011.
- Responding to ANSTO notifications to Comcare.

Through these mechanisms Comcare is satisfied that ANSTO is reporting notifiable incidents as required and requesting assistance and advice where necessary.