

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Agency - Comcare

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000236

Senator Ludwig provided in writing.

Question

Comcare - Departmental Dispute Resolution

1. How are disputes between departmental and/or agency staff mediated?
2. 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.
3. Please provide a list of disputes referred to the firm, including a brief description of the dispute.

Answer

1. *How are disputes between departmental and/or agency staff mediated?*

Staff disputes and conflict are mediated using both internal and external resources. External resources are usually procured where there is conflict involving multiple staff or for team conflict.

2. *Are any outside firms contracted to assist with this process? If yes: please list them, please include:*

The following outside firms were contracted and procured during the 2014–15 financial year:

- i) Carfi
- ii) Proactive Resolutions

a. The structure of payments made to each firm (e.g. retainers, fees for each consultation etc.)

- i) Carfi have been contracted to conduct two interventions for Comcare. Carfi were engaged to conduct two separate mediations with fees payable for each consultation;
- ii) Proactive Resolutions was selected to conduct one mediation/intervention for Comcare.

b. Amount paid to each firm since the last budget

- i) Carfi have been paid a total of \$57,554 for its work;
- ii) Proactive Resolutions were paid a total of \$23,100 for its work.

c. When the contract with the firm commenced

- i) The contract with Carfi commenced on 9 September 2014;
- ii) The contract with Proactive Resolutions commenced in October 2014.

d. When the contract with the firm will expire

- i) The contract with Carfi will expire on 30 June 2015;
- ii) The contract with Proactive Resolutions expired on 5 January 2015.

e. Why the firm was selected to provide the service.

- i) Carfi were contracted following the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and were selected due to its expertise in delivering solutions to team conflict;
- ii) Proactive Resolutions were contracted following the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and were selected due to its proven record in successfully resolving the type of issues involved.

3. Please provide a list of disputes referred to the firm, including a brief description of the dispute.

- i) Carfi were engaged identify sources and develop plans to resolve workplace conflicts involving whole teams.
- ii) Proactive Resolutions were engaged to mediate workplace conflict.