

## Senate Committee: Education and Employment

### QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

**Outcome: Agency: TEQSA**

**Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000564**

Senator O'Neill, Deborah asked on 31 May 2017, Proof Hansard page 20.

***TEQSA: contract staff***

#### **Question**

Senator O'NEILL: You could give me a rather detailed analysis of the way in which you are spending that \$1.2 million on contract staff; I would appreciate it if you could take that on notice.

Prof. Saunders: We could certainly do that.

Mr Wiegold: Yes. I could just clarify: on that \$1.2 million, I think earlier in your comment you mentioned that that was also encompassing experts. It is a blend, as mentioned earlier, of both experts and contracted staff.

Senator O'NEILL: So the contracted staff could be doing a range of jobs, such as case managers. Could you give me the list?

Mr Wiegold: Yes, we can provide you with that list. Another point on that is, in terms of your earlier comment, that there are about approximately 100 staff. I think you meant that—you are right—in 2014-15 we did have 100 APS at that point in time. It gradually reduced to 48, which is what we are now.

....

Senator O'NEILL: Could you give me a richer understanding of what is actually going on there with your staff—case managers, analysts, advisory, administration—who is in what roles, what analysis you are doing, who you are losing and the rationales for that, and what needs to happen with your APS level? I think it is clearly a pressing and contentious matter. Why can that work not be undertaken by APS employees? How many institutions do you look after? How many are there?

#### **Answer**

*The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) has provided the following response.*

In the recent period TEQSA has made an extensive use of contractors as a result of the APS cap and as workloads have increased.

In 2015–16, \$1.2 million was spent on contractors and, of that, approximately \$500,000 (40 per cent) was spent on enabling services (corporate jobs and roles) and approximately \$800,000 (60 per cent) was spent on assessment functions/roles.

At 31 May 2017 contracted staff performed the following jobs:

- Enabling services (corporate jobs and roles):
  - 0.8 x Assistant Director Communications
  - 1 x Designer Webmaster
  - 0.4 x Media Advisor
  - 1 x Assistant Director, Information Technology
  - 1 x Information Management Developer
  - 1 x Information Management Program Officer

- 1 x CRM Support Analyst
- 1 x Web Migration Resources
- 1 x Senior Finance Officer
- 1 x Finance Officer
- 1 x Financial Analysis
- 1 x Reception and Admin Officer

**Assessment functions**

- 9.4 x Senior Case Manager
- 1 x Case Manager
- 2 x Case Management Support Officer
- 1 x Senior Risk Analyst

Since the 2014–15 Budget announcement and the reduction from 99 to 48 budgeted APS ASL, TEQSA has implemented a number of strategies to manage our resources whilst ensuring we meet our assessment regulatory obligations. Strategies such as the use of a 'Core Plus' approach to streamlining assessments, shared services arrangements and three restructures, have been implemented, and the required savings realised, with further strategies under consideration.

With the reduction of APS staff, TEQSA has had to engage contractors to perform some core and enabling functions. Where contractors have been engaged to perform any role within the agency, TEQSA has put in place a number of control mechanisms to ensure the quality and integrity of the work performed is not compromised. Control measures include comprehensive screening processes, local and corporate inductions, the implementation of a subject matter expert to deliver training to new starters, offering professional development opportunities, and longer contract terms to retain contractors and encourage continuity.