

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Cross Portfolio

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-004027

Senator Marshall asked on 29 May 2017 on proof Hansard page 13

Question

Surge and permanent staff salary comparisons

Senator MARSHALL: Going back to Senator Cameron's first question about whether the contractors are paid the same as permanent staff, you may have an argument about your IT staff, but what about your surge—the 77 in your call centres? Are those people paid the same as the permanent call centre staff?

Ms Leon: We would have to take that on notice.

...

...

Senator MARSHALL: All right. Then do not give me an apples-for-apples comparison. Give me wages, superannuation, sick leave, annual leave—

Ms Leon: If we have that. I will take that on notice.

...

...

Ms Leon: I thought you meant you wanted us to ask the contractors, not the labour hire firm. We can ask the labour hire firm, yes. But, if we ask the individuals, I do not think they have to tell us what their arrangements are with the labour hire firm. But we are happy to ask the labour hire firm, yes.

Answer

The contractors engaged by the Department are not covered by the Department's enterprise agreement, and do not receive the same terms and conditions as permanent staff. Pay and conditions for contractors is a matter for the contractor and the relevant labour hire firm.

The Department generally engages contractors, including call centre staff, using panel arrangements established by other Commonwealth agencies. A Deed of Standing Offer is established with each supplier on the panel. The Deed includes a rates schedule, provided at the time of responding to tender, for the Department to pay to the supplier. It does not specify the terms and conditions between a supplier and the contractor, which is a matter for the supplier and the contractor. Enquiries with a selection of labour hire companies and contractors suggest that their arrangements do not include the provision for paid leave.

Labour hire firms are required to comply with all legislative obligations including taxation and superannuation.