

## Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

#### Outcome 1 - Employment

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-004093

Senator Marshall asked on 29 May 2017 on proof Hansard page 89

#### Question

##### Unauthorised access to jobseeker records

Mr Hehir: The staff need to have access to jobseeker records so they can do their job. The issue was the unauthorised access to that. We received a tip-off which we then confirmed and we wrote to the provider, asking them to show cause. My understanding is that they did an investigation and they came back, and, during that process, the employment consultant resigned.

Senator Cash: Again, Senator Marshall, we will ensure that the department takes this on notice and comes back to you with full details, as opposed to supposed recollections.

#### Answer

- On 16 June 2016, the Department received a tipoff complaint from a former job seeker, alleging unauthorised access to his job seeker records.
- Analysis conducted by the Department identified that two staff of Sureway Employment and Training Pty Ltd, a subcontractor for *jobactive* provider Max Solutions Pty Ltd, accessed the job seeker's records on 12 and 24 February 2016 and 3 May 2016 at the Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance sites.
- The Department suspended both staff members access to the IT system whilst an investigation was conducted by the Department assisted by an external consultant to determine if access to the jobseeker's personal information was for business purposes.
- The investigation found that one staff member did not have a valid business reason to access the records. The other staff member was shown to have a valid business reason.
- Both Sureway Employment and Training Pty Ltd and Max Solutions Pty Ltd were sent Show Cause letters from the Department on 20 September 2016 that required both providers to respond in writing to specific rectification action.
- The Department was advised on 20 September 2016 that the staff member who had accessed the job seeker's record without a valid business reason had resigned.
- Sureway Employment and Training Pty Ltd responded to the Department on 20 October 2016 with a report that outlined their rectification actions.
- Max Solutions Pty Ltd responded to the Department on 25 October 2016 with a comprehensive response that outlined expectations to be placed on subcontractors and MAX Solutions staff.
- Both providers reiterated that they take their responsibilities with IT System Security and all other Personal Information seriously and are committed to full compliance in this important legal and ethical area.
- On 7 December 2016 the Department wrote to both providers indicating acceptance of the rectification actions, noting it will monitor these as part of its ongoing contract management.