

## **Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment**

### **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017**

#### **Outcome 1 - Employment**

**Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000909**

**Senator Siewert asked on 19 October 2016 on proof Hansard page 12**

#### **Question**

##### **Commonwealth Ombudsman Report - jobactive complaints**

Senator SIEWERT: I want to touch on the latest report from the Commonwealth Ombudsman, 2015-16, where they talk about the number of complaints about services from jobactive. They say it has increased by 45.1 per cent, and this followed a 53.1 per cent increase in 2014-15. The number of complaints about services from jobactive providers and, before that, JSA has increased. I wonder if you have looked at that report and what your response is. I must admit it coincides with a significant increase in the number of complaints I get in my office.

Mr Hehir: I have not undertaken a specific assessment of the Ombudsman's report. We certainly keep track of the overall level of complaints that we receive through our customer service line. I think we noted last time that, at the transition as we moved from one contract to another, we did see a significant increase in terms of complaints or contact to the customer service line. In one sense that was expected—we moved about 47 per cent, or just under half, of the jobseekers from one provider to another. A large part of that was because a significant number of JSA providers did not continue, so we had to send the jobseekers to a different provider. I need to check and see whether our figures this year are significantly different. But certainly we did see a significant increase associated, in our view, with the transfer of jobseekers from one provider to another.

Senator SIEWERT: Do you have your complaint figures on you? I will then come back to the Ombudsman's report.

Mr Hehir: Yes. There was a significant increase in 2015-16 from 2014-15. The increase went from 12,210 to 18,702. As I said before, we believe a significant proportion of that increase is associated with the movement of jobseekers from their previous JSA provider to a new jobactive provider. We certainly feel that was a large part of it. I can get you the data for year-to-date.

Senator SIEWERT: If you could get me that data for year-to-date, that would be appreciated,

#### **Answer**

The number of jobactive complaints from 1 July 2016 to 1 September 2016 is 3,085.