

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Additional Estimates Hearing—February 2015

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Redundancies**
Question: **13**
Hansard Reference **p 38, 23 February 2015**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 April 2015

Senator WONG: Is it correct that the staff member who had been the subject of the Privileges Committee matter has been made redundant?

Ms Mills: Yes.

Senator WONG: Was that a voluntary or forced redundancy?

Ms Mills: Voluntary, as I understand it.

CHAIR: That was quite a conditional comment.

Ms Mills: To my knowledge it was, but I do not want to—

CHAIR: I am sure someone here must know whether it was voluntary or compulsory.

Ms Mills: I do not know. I will have to check.

Senator WONG: But you said that you thought that it was. If you do not know, Ms Mills—we do not expect you to know everything—you can take things on notice.

Ms Mills: I said, 'I thought', and I have clarified that I am not sure and am checking that out.

Senator WONG: Were you involved in the redundancy?

Ms Mills: Only in the sense that I sign off on all redundancies. Can I take it on notice—because I am not sure about that specific case?

Senator WONG: Sure. How much more have you received for redundancies in the current financial year?

Mr Wright: Approximately \$1.6 million.

Senator WONG: Is that in table 1.4 of the additional estimates statement?

Mr Wright: It is in table 1—and included in table 1.4, yes.

Senator WONG: How many staff are intended to be made redundant?

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Ms Mills: We have sought funding on the basis of approximately 15 to 17, depending what we can afford.

Senator WONG: How many to date?

Ms Croke: We have had six to date.

Senator WONG: How many of those were involuntary and how many were voluntary?

Ms Croke: Since 1 July 2014, all six were voluntary and we have had one involuntary one in the same period.

Senator WONG: Six plus one or five plus one?

Ms Croke: Six plus one.

Senator WONG: Six voluntary and one involuntary. I do not suppose we know who the involuntary one was. Is that the question I was asking previously?

Ms Croke: I do not have that information.

Answer

The staff member who had been the subject of the Privileges Committee matter made a general protections application in the Fair Work Commission.

As a result of a settlement reached in conciliation before the Fair Work Commission, this staff member had her employment terminated on the grounds that she was excess to the requirements of the

Department with payment of redundancy benefits (ie involuntary) and the agreement of the staff member to discontinue the proceedings.

While the settlement is confidential, and was made on the basis of no admission of liability, the confidentiality requirements under the Deed of Release do not prevent DPS from disclosing information when required to satisfy a request of the Commonwealth Parliament.