

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Budget Estimates Hearing—May 2016

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: PSS recruitment requirements

Question: 4

Hansard Reference p 12; 5 May 2016

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 June 2016

CHAIR: In respect of—this is a slightly different thing but it still relates to staff, and in particular staff at PSL1 to security officer positions within the parliament. Has the process for recruitment changed at all in recent times with respect to those types of positions?

Mr Stefanic: In terms of the requirements for applying for the role?

CHAIR: Yes. I will tell you why—Mr Barnes, you are involved in this, so I will come back to you. I am advised, or it has been suggested to me, that current employees within the PSS were not required to go through the full recruitment process, because they had passed it previously. Subsequent to that advice, they have been told that they all have to then go through the same comprehensive examination as new employees.

Mr Barnes: Chair, I am aware that we have been trying to enhance our selection processes, so there has been modification of that process over time to meet the needs as they change. It has been necessary for all applicants for positions to fulfil the requirements of the selection process; however, applicants who are already ongoing members of the service are not required to fulfil the physical aspects of those requirements, unless they are applying for a higher position.

Mr Barnes: The assessment day is part of that process, yes.

CHAIR: Any advice that you may have provided that said something to the effect that all applicants will be assessed the same way regardless of any prior assessment they may have participated in would not overrule the requirement not to be involved in the assessment?

Mr Barnes: Can I take that on notice? I want to make sure that we have that exactly right.

Answer

The process for recruitment of security officers changed in October 2015. A physical fitness requirement was added to the process and applied to the next recruitment campaign advertised on 29 February 2016. Other components have been improved or amended as deemed necessary.

In relation to this recruitment process, on 4 March 2016 an initial email was sent to applicants who were currently non-ongoing PSS employees advising that they were not required to attend the assessment centre. Subsequently, it was determined that all applicants would be required to undergo the same recruitment process. This was verbally communicated to affected officers. The exception to this decision was the group of existing ongoing part-time PSS staff who were invited to extend their hours of work (taking some to full time employment status).

As a result of the advertisement for PSL 1/2 PSS staff on 29 February 2016, eight new PSS staff commenced training on 9 May 2016 (one of whom has since withdrawn).

PSL 1/2 security roles were again advertised on 19 May 2016 to recruit further staff.