

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Tourism and Resources Portfolio
Budget Estimates 2005-2006, 30-31 May 2005

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND RESOURCES
IP AUSTRALIA
GEOSCIENCE AUSTRALIA
NATIONAL OFFSHORE PETROLEUM SAFETY AUTHORITY

TOPIC: UNSCHEDULED ABSENCES

REFERENCE: WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTION No.94
(Written QON)

Senator Mason asked:

For each of the last four financial or calendar years for which this information is available:

- what was the average number of sick leave days taken per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee;
- what was the average number of days of unscheduled absence (encompassing all types of leave) taken per FTE employee.

ANSWER

The average numbers of sick leave days and unscheduled absences per FTE employee are set out in the following tables.

Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources

Year	Sick Leave	Unscheduled absence
2001-02	6.97	10.95
2002-03	7.67	9.31
2003-04	7.59	9.62
2004-05	7.38	10.08

The unscheduled absence figures cover several areas as determined in the context of the Department's certified agreement negotiations. Broadly, there are four types of leave encompassing compensation, sick, carer and other (bereavement, emergency, moving house, Defence training, examination, disaster, jury duty, State Emergency Service, training and personal development).

IP Australia

Year	Sick Leave	Personal leave	Unscheduled absence
2001-02		11.82	12.08
2002-03		13.2	13.29
2003-04	11.68		13.02
2004-05	9.46		13.12

Personal leave consists of sick leave and carer's leave. Figures breaking down personal leave into sick leave and carer's leave are not available for 2001-02 and 2002-03.

The unscheduled absence figures consist of personal leave (sick and carer's), bereavement and emergency leave.

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Geoscience Australia

Year	Sick Leave	Unscheduled absence
2001-02	2.03*	3.61*
2002-03	3.22	5.0
2003-04	3.90	5.81
2004-05	3.91	6.06

* Merger between AGSO and AUSLIG in September 2001. These figures are based on staff numbers in June 2002.

The unscheduled absence figures are comprised of leave taken for the circumstances covered by Personal Circumstances and Support (PCS) Leave under the Geoscience Australia certified agreement 2002-2005. These circumstances are set out in section 46 of the agreement and the relevant clauses are provided below.

46.6 The types of circumstances that may be considered appropriate for the granting of PCS Leave are:

- (a) Personal sickness or injury – subject to the limits specified in this Section;
- (b) Where the employee is required to care for the immediate family (see definition in clause 4.1) on a short term basis due to illness or injury of the family member – normally a maximum of 2 weeks for each separate illness or injury;
- (c) Moving house;
- (d) Birth of a child;
- (e) Graduation;
- (f) Property emergencies;
- (g) Funerals;
- (h) Bus strikes or vehicle breakdowns where it is not possible for the employee to attend work; or
- (i) Natural disasters where the employee is directly affected and consequently is unable to attend work.

46.7 A longer period of PCS Leave than specified in clause 46.6(b) may only be approved where the Chief Executive Officer considers that there are exceptional circumstances that justify approval of a longer period. These circumstances shall be where:

- (a) it is not possible for other arrangements to be made by the employee; and
- (b) all flex credits have been used.

National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority

The average number of sick leave days per FTE employee for January to June 2005 was 1.91 days and the average number of unscheduled absences was 2 days. The unscheduled absence figures encompass sick, bereavement and carer's leave.

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QUESTION No.95

(Written QON)

Senator Mason asked:

Does the Department collect, collate and analyse data about unscheduled absence and/or sick leave, for example, which days of the week that employees are away, reasons for absence, dates of absence, employee's age, gender, length of service and work unit location?

ANSWER

Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources

Departmental and divisional personal leave figures are benchmarked against an APS median. Although other patterns of absence (e.g. according to gender, classification, age etc.) could be identified, the Department has not seen it necessary to do this in a systematic way.

IP Australia

Personal leave taken by employees is electronically monitored and reported monthly to the agency's Executive. The certified agreement also contains a commitment from managers and employees to participate and support a review of unscheduled leave (including sick, carer's and miscellaneous leave) during the life of the agreement and to implement the review's outcomes. This review will require an analysis of all available data in relation to unscheduled leave taken by employees.

Geoscience Australia

Yes. On a monthly basis, Geoscience Australia collects, collates and analyses the PCS Leave taken by division, age and gender.

National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority

No.

QUESTION No.96

(Written QON)

Senator Mason asked:

Does the Department record the number and/or percentage of working days lost due to unscheduled absence and/or sick leave in the Annual Report?

ANSWER

The Department, IP Australia, Geoscience Australia and NOPSA do not record these details in the Annual Report.

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QUESTION No.97
(Written QON)

Senator Mason asked:

Does the Department record the cost of unscheduled absence and/or sick leave in annual financial statements?

ANSWER

The Department, IP Australia, Geoscience Australia and NOPSA do not record these details in annual financial statements.