

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

1 June 2010

Question: BET 251

Topic: OH&S claims relating to the ATO case management system (ATO)

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Senator XENOPHON—I will go to the question of occupational health and safety. Was the ATO aware that the font size of the computer application did not mean the minimum height requirements specified in Australian and New Zealand standards?

Mr Butler—I presume that relates to the Seybold case management system, not the system delivered in January this year?

Senator XENOPHON—Yes.

Mr Butler—We have one case management system across the whole of the ATO. The ATO was aware of that particular issue, and we had some choices that we made in full consultation with people. The choice was that we have larger font, and people would need to scroll and click a lot more, which would produce a different type of occupational health and safety issue; so we made a trade-off choice, and Comcare has been investigating some of these issues.

Senator XENOPHON—Okay, and can you answer on notice how many claims there have been in relation to the new system compared to last year?

Answer:

The ATO has a rigorous program to address computer based injuries. This includes the close monitoring of both injuries and incidents in order to determine if specific computer applications are placing the ATO workforce at risk. The monitoring of the Siebel system, over the past five years, has not revealed the presence of any incidents or injuries specific to the use of the Siebel system in the ATO workplace.

Since the first deployment of Siebel in 2005 there has been a decrease of 54 per cent in the number of computer based type injuries (muscular skeletal disorder). Further, there have been no injuries related to eye strain during this time.