

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2012-2013**

Cross Portfolio

DEEWR Question No. EW0827_13

Senator Back provided in writing.

Refers to previous DEEWR Question No's. EW0742_13 and EW0473_13.

Question

Commissioned Reports- financial year to date

How many Reports have been commissioned by the Government in your department/agency this financial year to date? Please provide details of each report including date commissioned, date report handed to Government, date of public release, Terms of Reference and Committee members.

- How much did each report cost/or is estimated to cost? How many departmental staff were involved in each report and at what level?
- What is the current status of each report? When is the Government intending to respond to these reports?

Answer

There have been three reports commissioned by the Government for the 2012–13 financial year to date. Details of the three reports are attached.

Name of Report	Details of report including date commissioned, date report handed to Government, date of public release, Terms of Reference and Committee members.	Cost/estimate cost of the Report	How many departmental staff were involved in each report and at what level?	What is the current status of the Report?	When is the Government intending to respond to these reports?
1. Report of the Comcare Scheme's Performance, Governance and Financial framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioned 24 July 2012 as part of the Review of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (SRC Act). Provided to Government 7 December 2012. Not released to public. ToR at Attachment A Report authored by Dr Allan Hawke AC 	\$125,000 (incl. GST)	EL2 x 3 EL1 x 3	Under consideration	Government is considering its response
2. Report of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioned 24 July 2012 Provided to Government 25 February 2013 Not yet released to public. ToR at Attachment A Report authored by Mr Peter Hanks QC 	\$874,000 (incl. GST)	EL2 x 3 EL1 x 2	Under consideration	Government is considering its response
3. Report of the review of the Seacare Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioned 16 October 2012 Provided to Government 25 March 2013 Not yet released to public. ToR at Attachment B Report authored by Mr Robin Stewart-Crompton 	\$83,000 (incl. GST)	EL2 x 2 EL1 x 2 APS4 x 1	Under consideration	Government is considering its response

Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (SRC Act)
Terms of Reference

The Australian Government aims to build a stronger, fairer Australia through improved productivity, national security, increased social inclusion and building community resilience.

The impact of workplace harm on workers and their families is significant. For this reason, the Government is committed to ensuring that the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act) provides fair and appropriate workers' compensation arrangements for all workers covered by that legislation.

The Government believes that the Comcare scheme should be exemplary in its scheme-design as well as in its service delivery. To ensure the federal workers' compensation arrangements reflect contemporary social models and best practice, the review will take into account arrangements within Australian and overseas accident compensation schemes. Issues such as the national disability reforms and reducing red tape will also be considered.

The review will inquire and report on:

1. Any legislative anomalies and updates that need to be addressed, including:
 - 1.1 identifying and resolving anomalies in the legislation and in the operation of the scheme
 - 1.2 the framework to achieve the objectives of providing an equitable and cost-effective compensation system, with a particular emphasis on the improved rehabilitation of injured workers
 - 1.3 ensuring fair and equitable financial, medical and rehabilitation support for injured workers and their families
 - 1.4 a framework to resolve disputes quickly, fairly and at a low cost
 - 1.5 ensuring the application of workers' compensation legislation does not disadvantage workers over the age of 65 and there is no gap between the workers' compensation age limit and the foreshadowed increase to the age pension eligibility age to 67 by 2023.
2. The performance of the Comcare scheme and ways to improve its operation, including:
 - 2.1 an examination of the different outcomes achieved by private and public sector employers concerning the recovery and return to work of injured workers
 - 2.2 improved delivery of recovery and support services by Comcare.
3. The financial framework of the Comcare scheme, including:
 - 3.1 the financial sustainability of the scheme
 - 3.2 a premium framework that improves and rewards scheme performance
 - 3.3 the governance arrangements for Comcare
 - 3.4 ensuring that the financial framework is consistent with contemporary prudential management practice.

The review will be finalised by 1 February 2013. It is the Government's intention that the review will not consider any reduction in existing benefits afforded to workers covered by the Comcare scheme.

Review of the Seacare Scheme – Draft Terms of Reference

The Australian Government aims to build a stronger, fairer Australia through improved productivity, national security, increased social inclusion and building community resilience.

As a result of major reforms to maritime legislation being undertaken by the Government, the Government's strong support for the development of harmonised model work health and safety legislation, and the complexities of coverage, a comprehensive review of the Seacare Scheme is needed in order to clarify scheme coverage in addition to updating the scheme's work health and safety and workers' compensation provisions.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that the Seacare Scheme provides a rigorous and harmonised work health and safety regime as well as fair and appropriate workers' compensation arrangements for all workers covered by the scheme legislation.

The Australian Government believes that the Seacare Scheme should be best practice, and comparable to other Australian work health and safety and workers' compensation schemes for people in the maritime industry.

The review will inquire and report on:

- The coverage of the Seacare Scheme, including:
 - The interaction of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Act 1993* (OHS(MI)) with state and territory schemes and the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006*;
 - A legislative framework for the Seacare Scheme that identifies the relevant coverage for a particular maritime activity; and
 - The availability and scope for exemptions from *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1992* (Seafarers Act).
- The scope and necessity for amending and updating any legislative inconsistencies in the Seacare Scheme, including:
 - Any provisions in the legislation which need to be updated; and
 - Ensuring consistency between the Seafarers Act and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act).
 - Legislative changes required to OHS(MI) to ensure consistency with the model work health and safety laws.
- The scope for amending the Seafarers Act to help reduce workers' compensation premium costs.
- The governance arrangements for the Seacare Scheme.

The review on the coverage of the Seacare Scheme will report by 14 December 2012. The review will report on the remaining aspects by 22 February 2013.

It is the Government's intention that the review will not consider any reduction in existing benefits afforded to workers covered by the Seacare Scheme.