

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2011-2012

Agency - Comcare

DEEWR Question No.EW0091_12

Senator Abetz provided in writing.

Question

A Lack Of Resources And A Plan To Outsource The Accreditation Assessments

Documents to be tabled: Comcare provided for the SRCC on 10 December 2008 (Doc 218-219) Email from Ian Ireland (Comcare) to others in Comcare 29 June 2009 (doc 199) Email from Ian Ireland (Comcare) to others in Comcare 9 July 2009 (doc 105-106) Comcare costing of outsourcing HSR course assessment (dod 100-101) The real motivation for the change is to make the job of accreditation easier for Comcare. Not to make training better. This would enable outsourcing. Outsourcing would be cheaper if the range of possible courses was limited to a simple face-face five day formula. Questions: 1.Please look at the briefing Comcare provided for the SRCC on 10 December 2008 (Doc 218-219) when seeking to begin the review. Is a key problem that the review aims to address some issues of the training panel having interest in courses? 2.How were these concerns over the training panel's interest in courses addressed? 3.Please refer to section 2.15 of the SRCC minutes of 18 December 2009. Do the minutes note concerns about potential conflicts of interest with the Review? What were those concerns and how were they addressed? 4.Was one of the issues that prompted the review the difficulty in resourcing the accreditation system (e.g. look at paragraphs 6-9)? 5.If the review was prompted by improving the quality of training, which paragraph actually points that out? 6.Look at the document of 29 June 2009 (Doc 199). Did Comcare "anticipate" an outcome of the Review? 7.DidComcare anticipate that the Review would recommend that Comcare will be able to charge for assessments and the legal advice? 8.Is the legal advice received by Comcare (Doc 105-106) specifically about Comcare's desire to recover costs associated with accreditation? 9.Is it true therefore that the main reason for this review was not actually improve training but to come up with an easier and cheaper way for Comcare to accredit courses or to recover the costs? 10.Look at the "outsourcing" costing document dated 25 August 2009 (Doc 100-101). Is it true that Comcare planned to outsource the accreditation assessments? 11.If training options were limited to one formula, such as face to face, versus the many possibilities allowed by the 2007 guidelines, would this make the task of accreditation simpler? 12.Is it true that assessment of one-size-fits all 5-day classroom training would be a simpler model to outsource?

Answer

Comcare has provided the following response.

1. No. Document 218-219 is the Chairman's Brief for Agenda item 2.11 of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (SRCC) meeting of 10 December 2008. Such briefings are generally only provided to the SRCC Chairperson and not SRCC members. The review scope approved by the SRCC at this meeting did not cover the issue of training panel members having an interest in courses.
2. Please refer to the answer in question one.

3. Yes. The minutes of the SRCC meeting of 18 December 2009 state that 'Commissioners raised a number of issues with the report, including alleged conflicts of interest and delays in the process.' The Chair addressed this by stating that interested Commissioners should be consulted in the development of the revised model and that the concerns of Commissioner Powell should be addressed in the development of the model.
4. It is assumed that the question relates to paragraphs 6-9 of the document 'Recovery of Costs associated with HSR Course Accreditation'. One of the objectives of the review was to examine the current accreditation process. One of the recommendations that came out of the review was that the SRCC considers partial cost-recovery to fund an improved accreditation process. The document explores that option.
5. The project brief states that one of the purposes of the review is to 'improve the outcomes for HSRs through quality courses accredited in a cost effective manner in reasonable timeframes.'
6. Comcare was aware that this option was being explored.
7. Comcare was aware that this option was being explored.
8. Yes.
9. No.
10. Comcare was obtaining estimates of the costs of partially outsourcing the HSR Training Course Assessment.
11. No. Accreditation was against the Training Objectives (2007 Guidelines) and is against Training Objectives and Learning Outcomes (2010 Guidelines).
12. No.