

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES 2011-2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Public Service Commission

Outcome/Program: State of the Service Report

Topic: Absenteeism in the APS – APS action taken

Senator: Senator Mason

Question reference number: 115

Type of question: Hansard, FPA, p. 113, 13 February 2012

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 30 March 2012

Number of pages: 1

Question: Senator MASON: Could you take on notice also what the APS is doing to address absenteeism? The minister knows that I have been asking about this since 2004, and I have to say: it is not getting better; it is getting worse.

Senator Chris Evans: Do you want the question or the answer?

Senator MASON: Both.

Answer:

Responses to the 2011 State of the Service agency survey indicate that APS agencies have implemented a broad range of strategies to help manage workplace absences, such as:

- providing flexible working arrangements (93%);
- conducting workplace health promotion programs (90%);
- establishing or communicating attendance expectations (68%);
- using a reporting framework to assist managers to monitor absences and highlight areas for further investigation (54%);
- including workplace absence as a regular agenda item at senior management meetings (50%); and
- using initiatives to build a positive workplace culture that encourages employees to come to work (47%).

In addition, the Commission helps to address absenteeism through monitoring absence across the APS including:

- tracking unscheduled absence rates through the State of the Service surveys;
- providing feedback to agencies on their results compared to the APS; and
- reporting through the annual State of the Service report on overall results and the range of strategies that agencies are using to manage absenteeism.