

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Australian Electoral Commission

Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2006

Question: F64

Outcome: Across all Outcomes/Outputs

Topic: Sick and unscheduled leave

Written Question on Notice

Senator Mason asked:

1. With respect to the Australian Electoral Commission (the Commission) in the last calendar year or financial year you have records for what is the total number of days of sick leave and unscheduled leave taken by the Commission's employees? Over the same period, what was the average number of days of sick leave and unscheduled leave taken per Full Time Equivalent employee of the Commission
2. What is the sick leave entitlement allowable to the employees of the Commission as part of the terms of their employment (under the Certified Agreement or individual contracts)?
3. Does the Commission monitor and review the employees' use of sick leave entitlement? Has the procedure changed in the last 12 months?
4. What initiatives, if any, has the Commission undertaken in the past three years to address absenteeism?

Answer:

1. The total number of sick leave days taken by staff during the period 1 July 2005 and 14 June 2006 was 5374.35. The total number of unscheduled leave days taken by staff during the period 1 July 2005 and 14 June 2006 was 3069.95.

The average number of:

- sick leave days is 7.45 days per Full Time Equivalent employee
 - unscheduled leave days is 4.26 days per Full Time Equivalent employee
2. 18 days for fulltime staff, pro rata for part-time staff.
 3. Yes. No change to procedures.

4. The AEC has made Health Screening tests and influenza vaccinations available to all ongoing AEC employees. The program is part of an existing Health and Well-being program.

The AEC has also undertaken research work on reducing absenteeism since 2003-4. The AEC is committed to reducing unscheduled absences as per Clause 4 of the AEC Certified Agreement 2004-7.

The AEC injury management guidelines for compensation claims and non-compensation cases focus on an early return to work.

The AEC focuses on injury prevention and management through the work of the National Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

The AEC has identified a number of strategies to be introduced that include:

- Development of a clearly written and communicated attendance policy including input from the Australian Public Service's advice on managing unscheduled absences;
- Processes to support the application of the policy;
- Education of staff on the policy and support processes;
- Development activities for managers;
- Implementing health and well-being programs, and
- Establishing agreed targets for the reduction in unscheduled absences.

The AEC will be introducing an Unscheduled Absences Policy which will be linked to the Better People Management Practice Guides by the Australian Public Service Commission, due to be released on June 28 2006.