

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Human Services and agencies

Budget Estimates 2006-2007, 25 May 2006

Question: HS 72

Outcome 1, Output 1.1

Topic: Centrelink - Absenteeism

Hansard page or Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR MASON asked on 25/5/2006:

1. With respect to Centrelink, 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 Agency'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 Agency?
2. What is the sick leave entitlement allowable to the employees of the Agency as part of the terms of their employment (under the Certified Agreement or individual contracts)?
3. Does the Agency monitor and review the employees' use of sick leave entitlement? Has this procedure changed in the past 12 months?
4. What initiatives, if any, has the Agency undertaken in the past three years to address absenteeism?

Answer:

1. In the period July 2005 to April 2006, the total number of days sick leave or unscheduled absence taken by Centrelink employees was 271,289 or 11.52 days per full time employee. Of this, 195,324 were sick leave. This is a reduction of 35,101 or 1.49 days per full time employee for the same period last year.
2. 18 days personal leave (personal leave is used for personal, sick, caring and fostering purposes) under the Centrelink Agreement.
3. Yes – through the production of monthly reports on the level of unscheduled absence. The reports show individual sites and provide trend data for each site.

No, the monitoring and review procedure has not changed over the past 12 months.
4. The Agency has successfully introduced the following initiatives to reduce absenteeism:
 - An attendance project focussing on communication and awareness raising, leadership accountability and support and performance monitoring and reporting.
 - Move from annual to monthly accrual of personal leave entitlements.
 - Production of monthly reports to managers.
 - A reduction in personal leave entitlements from 20 days to 18 days per year under the Centrelink Agreement.
 - Requirement for employees to provide evidence to support access to paid personal leave after five unsupported absences in a calendar year.

To prepare this answer it has taken approximately 5 hours and 20 minutes at an estimated cost of \$289.