

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing – October 2009
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Topic: Agencies' Participation in APS Disability Network

Question reference number: PM51(a-c)

Senator Claire Moore asked:

- a) Is there any incentive or compulsion to departments to take part in that network?
- b) How do you find out whether all the agencies that should be involved are and what can you do to ensure that that does happen?
- c) It would just be useful to know, particularly for the next round of estimates, exactly which agencies have taken part, because sometimes the good ones cover up for the ones who are not so good.

Type of Question: Hansard F&PA page 71, 19 October 2009

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 4 December 2009

Number of Pages: 1

Responses:

- a) There is no compulsion for departments to participate in the network. The primary incentive for departments to participate in the network is to access and share information and experience that will improve their employment of people with disability.
- b) The Commission initially sought agency involvement through the Diversity Network, where agencies are encouraged to share information about their diversity-related employment practices. The Diversity Network includes a disability component, which is managed by the Commission and where agency representatives share information. The Commission also consults with a broad range of agencies on diversity and other issues. Where the Commission become aware of a particular practice or initiative in an agency not currently involved in the network, then they are invited to join and share this information with the broader group.
- c) The following agencies have representatives taking part:
 - the Australian Public Service Commission;
 - the Australian Taxation Office;
 - Centrelink;
 - the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations;
 - the Department of Defence;
 - the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs;
 - the Department of Finance; and
 - Medicare Australia.

The Diversity Network is managed by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, is open to all agencies and has a much larger representation.