

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(18) Output: Internal Product

Senator Evans asked:

Indigenous Employment in the OIPC:

- (1) How many Indigenous employees are there currently in the OIPC? What percentage of total employees in the OIPC does this represent?
- (2) How many Indigenous people are actually working at OIPC at the moment (not on leave without pay)? What percentage of total employees in the OIPC does this represent?
- (3) What number of those people are in Executive Level or Senior Executive positions?
- (4) How many ICC Regional Managers are there in total? How many current ICC Regional Managers are Indigenous?
- (5) Do all ICC Regional Managers receive cross-cultural training? If so, please provide details on the training: how long does it go for? What does it cover? How often?
- (6) Has there been a significant reduction in Indigenous employment and retention since the introduction of new arrangements? If so why?
- (7) APS has identified this as a priority area of action. What is OIPC doing to improve rates of engagement and retention?
- (8) Do you specify in your ads that you encourage Aboriginal people to apply? If not, why not?

Answer:

- (1) As at 30 October 2005, OIPC employed a total of 158 (139 ongoing and 19 non-ongoing) Indigenous Staff. This constitutes 29% of total OIPC staffing and is in excess of 13 times the APS average.
- (2) As at 30 October 2005, 151 Indigenous staff were on duty. This represents 27% of OIPC staff.

(3) 33 Indigenous staff are in Executive Level positions. This represents 18% of total staff at this level.

6 Indigenous staff are in Senior Executive Service positions, representing 14% of total staff at level.

APSC *State of the Service Report 2004-05* indicates that the APS average for Indigenous employees at the Executive Level is 1.1% and at the SES level, 1.0%.

(4) There are a total of 29 ICC Managers, of which 7 are Indigenous.

(5) Selection criteria for ICC Manager positions include a reference to the ability to communicate and negotiate sensitively and effectively with Indigenous communities and individuals in carrying out the duties of the position. Selection of ICC Managers involves an assessment of the ability of applicants to operate effectively in this cross-cultural environment.

A key focus of ICC Managers' duties is engagement on Shared Responsibility Agreements and Regional Partnership Agreements with Indigenous groups and communities. ICC Managers have attended a total of fourteen days intensive workshopping on the subject of interaction with Indigenous groups and communities, a central element being effective consultation and negotiation in the cross-cultural environment.

Cross cultural training will be made available to all ICC staff in 2006.

(6) Since the introduction of the changed arrangements in Indigenous service delivery, Indigenous staff numbers have fallen, however, as at 30 October 2005, 29% of OIPC staff identify as Indigenous. This is more than 13 times the APS average.

OIPC's Indigenous staffing has reduced as a result of a number of factors including:

- transfers and promotions to other agencies as a result of machinery of government mapping of staff and the usual movements;
- a number of departures, by way of voluntary redundancy, of staff who, prior to 1 July 2005, were supporting Regional Councils; and
- a small number of resignations.

During the period 1 July 2004 and 30 October 2005, 97 new Indigenous staff were employed by OIPC.

(7) DIMIA has developed an Indigenous Recruitment and Career Development Plan. This document outlines a number of key strategies to assist in retaining and developing Indigenous employees. This strategic plan will be further developed and implemented in 2006.

OIPC has worked with the Australian Public Service Commission on the development of the *APS Indigenous Employment and Capability Strategy* and will continue in the implementation phase.

During 2005, OIPC supported two Indigenous employees on the APSC *Leadership in the Australian Public Service – an Indigenous Experience*. This initiative is a nine-month program which supports Executive Level 1 and 2 Indigenous public servants to build their leadership capabilities within a public service context, and to meet their personal, community, and agency

leadership aspirations and obligations. OIPC will support a further two officers in the 2006 program.

In February 2006, a current Indigenous officer (SES Band 2) will take up a new role of Senior Indigenous Mentor. Central to this officer's responsibilities will be to:

- implement and support OIPC Indigenous staff network with the aim of attracting/retaining Indigenous staff and building capabilities to enable them to grow into higher level roles (including solution brokers, ICC Managers or Deputy Managers);
- work closely with APSC in implementing the *APS Employment and Capability Strategy* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees;
- Develop a specific OIPC Indigenous Staff Development Program to further complement the DIMIA Indigenous Recruitment and Career Development Plan.
- provide support for participants in the APSC's *Leadership in the Australian Public Service Programme* for Indigenous EL1-2 staff from OIPC, and those from other agencies placed in ICCs

Intake for the 2006 OIPC Graduate Development Program includes 3 Indigenous applicants in a total of 14. This constitutes an Indigenous element of 21%.

(8) OIPC does not, as a matter of course, in advertisements for vacant positions specifically encourage Indigenous people to apply. OIPC seeks applications from all interested Australians with relevant skills, experience and background, including Indigenous people, and recruits on the basis of merit.