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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2014-2015

Brendan Smyth MLA (Chair), Mary Porter MLA (Deputy-Chair),
Giulia Jones MLA, Yvette Berry MLA



ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

MRS GIULIA JONES: To ask the Minister for Disability

In relation to: Bullying and Harassment

I am interested in the Directorate's/Agency's approach to dealing with bullying complaints and issues.

1. Tell me about bullying in the directorate/agency and what is being done about this issue?
2. How many reports of bullying have been made in the last (5 years) and (10 years) periods?
3. How many non-official reports and complaints were made
4. How many of these reports are substantiated? How many of these people suffering bullying are currently off work on workers' compensation, and how many have had time off work on workers' compensation?
5. Over the same time period, has there been reports of sexual harassment or other types of harassment, such as pregnancy harassment?
6. What has been the process for dealing with reports of this nature?

MINISTER BURCH : The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

In relation to the Community Services Directorate as a whole, across all the categories, a total of 13 formal reports relating to bullying/harassment were received in 2013/14. This compares with 9 in 2012/13.

All formal reports to human resources were investigated in line with the Directorate's processes and the Enterprise Agreement. Of the reports covering the above two year period, 8 were substantiated, 8 are currently under investigation and 6 were unsubstantiated and closed.

The requirements for investigating and reporting bullying and harassment have changed over time. Therefore, a report containing similar information prior to 2012/13 is not available.

In terms of reports substantiated which relate people suffering bullying that are currently off work on workers' compensation, this is not straightforward. The fact that a workers' compensation claim is approved by Comcare is not indicative of acceptance or verification that bullying and harassment has taken place, as Comcare is a no fault system. It relates to an acceptance of an injury being linked to the workplace as opposed to the acceptance of the incident occurring by the policy definition of bullying and harassment.

This means that a higher number may be approved by Comcare (relating to this and/or previous reporting periods) which may not have been substantiated by formal investigations by the Directorate.

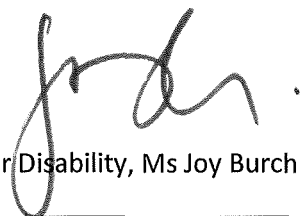
In relation to the 13 formal reports of bullying and harassment in 2013/14, there is 1 person currently off work on an accepted workers' compensation claim. 2 claims have not yet been determined by Comcare (i.e. pending decision) from the same reporting period.

There are no reports of sexual harassment or other types of harassment based on the reporting period.

The Respect Equity and Diversity (RED) framework was introduced in 2010. It supports a respectful, courteous and fair workplace which values individuals as important in building a positive workplace culture. There are 20 RED Contact Officers in CSD, responsible for promoting RED in the workplace. However, these officers do not conduct investigations into allegation of bullying or harassment.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2014-2015

Signature:



Date:

15.7.14

By the Minister for Disability, Ms Joy Burch MLA