



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN RENEWAL

CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA (CHAIR), SUZANNE ORR MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), TARA CHEYNE MLA,
NICOLE LAWDER MLA, JAMES MILLIGAN MLA

Inquiry into referred 2016–17 Annual and Financial Reports ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE



MS NICOLE LAWDER MLA: To ask the Minister for Planning and Land Management

In relation to: Staffing Culture at EPSD

1. Can you please provide the number of FTE and the headcount for people who work in the planning delivery division who identify as coming from a culturally and linguistically diverse background?
 - a. Can you also provide what level these people are?
2. Have there been any reported instances of staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds being passed over for positions because of their ethnicity?
 - a. If so, what actions has the Minister taken?
 - b. If so, what actions have the Directorate taken?
3. Have there been any reported instances of some employees being given favourable treatment during interview processes? i.e. receiving interview questions beforehand, or writing selection criteria that target certain candidates?
 - a. If so, what actions has the Minister taken?
 - b. If so, what actions have the Directorate taken?
4. Is it now a requirement that job applicants need to sit for a written assessment during interview processes?
 - a. If so, how long has this been in practice?
 - b. Is this a requirement for all roles?

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

1.

Planning delivery division	Culturally and linguistically diverse background	Total
FTE	17.81	81.07
Headcount	20	86

a.

NESB* Headcount Total	NESB FTE Total	Classification
1	0.22	ASO2
1	1	ASO3
1	1	ASO4
5	4.25	ASO5
4	3.64	ASO6
6	5.7	SOGC
1	1	SOB
1	1	SOA
20	17.81	

*Non-english speaking background

2. The Chief Minister received an anonymous complaint via email on 26 July 2017 suggesting there has been instances of staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds being passed over for positions because of their ethnicity.
- a. The Chief Minister responded accordingly and asked Bronwen Overton-Clarke, Deputy Director General of Workforce Capability and Governance to enquire into the recruitment practices of EPSDD. Ms Overton-Clarke through the Professional Standards Unit contacted EPSDD to ask for a response to the complaint. EPSDD provided a response, which provided information on EPSDD's recruitment practices and this information formed the basis of Ms Overton-Clarke's response to the complainant on 17 August 2017.
- b. During the 2016-2017 financial year, EPSDD processed 151 recruitment activities and to date only one complaint has been received. At the time that the complaint was received, EPSDD's People and Capability Branch thoroughly reviewed all Planning Delivery Division recruitment process that had occurred just prior to the complaint being received. Upon review of the processes, there was no evidence suggesting that staff from a culturally and linguistically background had been passed over because of their ethnicity.

The ACT Public Service encourages a diverse workforce and has many and varied inclusion programs to ensure the service as a whole delivers on that commitment.

The complaint lacked specific details and Ms Overton-Clarke asked the complainant to provide further information that could be assessed and she also encouraged the complainant to speak directly with the Director People and Capability if they wished to discuss their concerns further.

Furthermore, EPSDD has adopted a centralised recruitment model that ensures additional quality assurance mechanisms are in place both at the commencement of the recruitment cycle and outcomes are audited at the end of the cycle, prior to delegate finalising the selection report.

3. The Chief Minister received an anonymous complaint on 26 July 2017 suggesting that there had been some employees being given favourable treatment during interview processes.
 - a. The Chief Minister responded accordingly and asked Bronwen Overton-Clarke, Deputy Director General of Workforce Capability and Governance to enquire into the recruitment practices of EPSDD. Ms Overton-Clarke through the Professional Standards Unit contacted EPSDD to ask for a response to the complaint. EPSDD provided a response, which provided information on EPSDD's recruitment practices and this information formed the basis of Ms Overton-Clarke's response to the complainant on 17 August 2017.
 - b. In May 2017, the new Director of People and Capability reviewed EPSDD's recruitment practices as part of her on-boarding environmental scan, which resulted in additional quality assurance measures being implemented to further enhance the transparency and rigor of all recruitment processes within the Directorate. At the time of the complaint being received, the Directorate reviewed specific processes within the Planning Delivery Division and was unable to find any evidence of some employee's being given favourable treatment during interview processes.

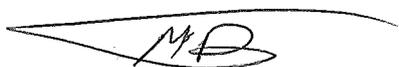
Position descriptions are developed in the context of required capabilities and not on the skills of potential candidates. Selection panels can determine whether interview questions will be provided to all shortlisted applicants prior to an interview. However, if a Panel decides to provide interviewees the interview questions prior to the interview, all candidates are provided the questions.

The Directorate does ensure that any reasonable adjustments that are requested by a candidate prior to the interview are accommodated where practicable.

4. It is not a requirement that a written assessment be undertaken for all recruitment activities. The use of a written assessment tool is at the discretion of the selection panel, having regard to the specific position duties and requirements of the role. Often written assessment tools are used to identify the most appropriate candidate for the advertised position, particularly when the position requires a high level of written competency.
 - a. Written assessment tools have formed part of best-practiced recruitment process for many decades, both in the public and private sectors. The Directorate utilises various recruitment assessment tools, depending on the job, to ensure that we are appointing the most suitably qualified, experienced and skilled people to the ACT Public Service.
 - b. Written assessments are not a requirement for all roles. A variety of assessment tools are selected to ensure that there is sufficient evidence to satisfy the Recruitment Panel that the candidate demonstrate the skills needed for the advertised role. In addition to traditional methods such as written application, resume and referee reports, other tools may include case studies, risk assessments, presentations and business case writing to form part of the interview process.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal

Signature:



Date:

8/12/17

By the Minister for Planning and Land Management, Mick Gentleman MLA

