

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Ms Walker to the Minister for Public Employment:

Public Sector Appeals and Grievance Reviews

1. Your annual report notes that there was a significant increase in s59 appeals and grievance reviews in 2014-15, increasing from 120 to 155. The top 5 reasons for this were selection decision, management action or decision, unfair treatment, bullying and agency handling of bullying. Can you advise of the number of appeals and grievances for the year to date and the reasons for those appeals?
2. Has the extensive merit selection training and special measure training had an impact on the number of grievance received?
3. Can you advise if any more agencies other than the 14 that requested the implementation of special measures for indigenous employment have come on board this financial year?
4. Have any agencies supported the special measure supporting employment of people with a disability?

ANSWER

1. 86 grievances were handled in the 2015/2016 financial year and are shown below by reason for the grievance:
 - 36 – Selection Decision
 - 27 – Management Action or Decision
 - 9 – Unfair Treatment
 - 5 - Application of Procedures and Policies
 - 3 – Agency Handling of Bullying
 - 2 – Bullying

- 2 –Disciplinary Decision
- 1 –Termination on Probation
- 1 – Application of Conditions of Service

- 40 Promotion Appeals were received in the 2015/16 financial year
- 3 Disciplinary Appeals were received in the 2015/16 financial year
- 1 Inability Appeal was received in the 2015/2016 financial year

2. Yes, the extensive merit selection training and special measures training has had an impact on the number of grievances received, with only 36 grievances about selection decisions in 2015/16 versus 73 in the previous years. Similarly the numbers of promotion appeals dropped to 40 in 2015/16, as opposed to 55 in the previous year. Only 2 of the promotion appeals related to special measures selections, and there have been no grievances about special measures.

3. Yes, more agencies have implemented special measures for Indigenous employment, and there are now 19 agencies with some form of special measures recruitment plan, and 11 of these apply special measures to all advertised vacancies. These agencies are:

- Department of Health
- Department of Education
- Department of Housing
- Department of Corporate and Information Services
- Department of Business
- Department of the Chief Minister
- Department of Arts and Museums
- Department of Sport and Recreation
- Department of Local Government and Community Services
- Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment
- Police, Fire and Emergency Services (for NTPS vacancies)

Eight other agencies (Corrections, Power and Water Corporation, Attorney General and Justice, Department of Transport, Tourism, Mines and Energy, Primary Industry and Fisheries, Parks and Wildlife) apply special measures in Indigenous employment to some vacancies as the agency deems appropriate, although it is difficult to monitor the extent of the application, if any, of the special measures when it is not applied universally.

4. Yes, a number of agencies support special measures for persons with a disability and several plans have been implemented in specific cases where agencies identified a person with a disability who needed assistance in gaining employment, or identified a disabled group who would be shown preference in hiring for a designated job. (e.g. a position in a mental health unit was reserved specifically for an applicant who had experienced mental health issues).

The current NTPS Disability Employment Program, to which all agencies contribute to create a pool of finances to support additional jobs employing persons with a disability, is an example of a special measures plan supporting persons with a disability, and is well supported within the NTPS, with nine persons with a disability currently employed under the program.