

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Higgins to the Minister for Public Employment:

Annual Report – Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment

1. A priority for 2016-17 was the development of bargaining parameters for negotiations of replacement agreements due in 2017. A similar priority is listed for 2017-18. Can you please explain the process around the development of bargaining parameters and negotiating replacement agreements and how these are scheduled across years?
2. How is the feedback received from public servants considered in the enterprise bargaining negotiations?
3. Another 2016-17 priority not achieved was the review of ECO terms and conditions. Can you please advise when this might be finalised and the specific areas under review?
4. Can you please advise the number of executive contract employees that were cut in 2016-17 in line with the stated intention of the current Government in the lead up to the 2016 election? Can you also advise the reduction target for 2017-18?
5. Can you please provide an update on the NTPS modern award that was reported in the 2015-16 report as a collaborative project between OCPE and the relevant unions and listed as a priority for 2016-17 but not mentioned in the 2016-17 report?
6. It is noted that the NTPS Ageing Workforce policy framework was circulated in early 2017 and that feedback has been consolidated and the policy framework has been launched. Does this mean the NTPS Transition to Retirement policy has been finalised? The policy was listed as a priority for 2016-17 but is not mentioned in the report.
7. Please detail the progress made on the development of an NTPS ATSI Employee Mentoring Program.
8. Given the shortage of Aboriginal Interpreters across Government agencies, specifically in the health sector, can you advise if there are any programs in place that will assist in increasing the number of Interpreters available to Government?

9. Given the slow decline in the number and percentage of NTPS promotions appealed since 2011-12, can you please explain the sudden increase in 2016-17?

Year		%
2012-13	10.	6.8%
2013-14	11.	4.6%
2014-15	12.	4.1%
2015-16	13.	2.8%
2016-17	14.	5.3%

10. The key performance indicators on page 53 do not provide target percentages. Can you please advise what the agency goals were in respect of all areas?
11. How many additional people moved to the Territory as a result of the part time public holidays given the rationale when introduced was to increase the population?
12. How much was spent on “unconscious bias training”?
13. How many Aboriginal people employed under the Office’s Special Measures Plan were from remote communities?
14. Does the Office consider having 19% male employees as being diverse and/or being representative of the community-at-large?

ANSWERS

1. Bargaining parameters are developed by the Commissioner for Public Employment, who is the employer, in conjunction with Agencies who have employees that are covered by the proposed Enterprise Agreement.

The following Enterprise Agreements are due to expire in 2018:

- Power and Water Corporation (expiry 15 July 2018)
- Territory Generation (expiry 15 July 2018)
- Nurses (expiry 9 August 2018)
- Dentists (expiry 21 August 2018)

Bargaining parameters are developed in preparation of agreements expiring across the years.

2. There are a number of mechanisms for employees to provide their feedback including email enquiries and telephone contact at OCPE, as well as feedback reported through agency reports. Feedback can be received throughout the

bargaining period after the Notice of Employee Representational Rights has been issued to employees.

Feedback provides a mechanism to hear the views of employees directly which can be considered in conjunction with feedback and views of unions and/or bargaining agents.

3. The review of Executive Contract Officer (ECO) terms and conditions of employment is expected to be completed during the 2017-18 reporting period. While a review of all terms and conditions form part of the review, specific areas include:
 - matters related to the Fair Work Act, particularly in terms of redundancy or transfer of business situations;
 - transition provisions (for current NTPS employees accepting ECO contracts), and severance entitlements;
 - the application of superannuation during workers compensation; and
 - general leave provisions.
4. In the financial year 2016-2017 there was a reduction in executive contract officer (ECO) numbers of nine across ECO levels 1 to 6. Chief Executive Officers are required to manage staffing within their agency budget and consider savings opportunities throughout the year, including across ECO levels.
5. A single enterprise award, called the Northern Territory Public Sector Enterprise Award 2016, made by the Fair Work Commission on the 19 August 2016. The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment together with NT unions developed the enterprise award from the 16 NTPS awards and made a joint submission, containing an agreed draft enterprise award, to the Fair Work Commission. The Fair Work Commission accepted the agreed draft enterprise award with only some minor changes. In conjunction with the National Employment Standards (NES), the enterprise award provides a legislated safety net of terms and conditions under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) that underpins enterprise bargaining in the NTPS.
6. The NTPS Ageing Workforce policy framework encompasses transition to retirement information, and replaces the “NTPS Transition to Retirement” policy.
7. The mentoring program is anticipated to be delivered from April 2018.
8. The Department of Housing and Community Development recruits Aboriginal Interpreters. This question should be directed to them.
9. In 2016-17 a large number of appeals were received in regards to a bulk recruitment selection process.
10. Target percentages can be found in 2017/18 Budget Paper 3, page 169.

11. Given the previous CLP administration's complete mishandling of the economy and failure to prepare for the wind-down of INPEX construction means that this Government inherited a shrinking population. Any measures to reverse this trend will be considered.
12. \$12,800
13. Current systems are unable to provide the data requested.
14. The current proportion of male employees engaged in OCPE is not reflective of the gender ratio in the Northern Territory. OCPE supports diversity and strives to have a diverse workforce.