

Questions taken on notice

Portfolio:	Workplace Safety
Witness:	Ms Falkingham
Committee member:	Mr D O'Brien
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Relevant text:

Mr D O'BRIEN: Okay. Where does workplace safety fit into your output summary by departmental objectives?

Ms FALKINGHAM: I will have to take that on notice for you, Mr O'Brien, because those fall under the workplace safety annual report.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Okay.

Ms STITT: Can I just add, though, Mr O'Brien, that obviously the Department of Justice and Community Safety supports me as the Minister for Workplace Safety, but WorkSafe is the independent statutory occupational health and safety regulator and workers compensations insurer, so it is just a little different—

Mr D O'BRIEN: Yes, but you have still got a portfolio. There is a portfolio, so I just wanted to know where it is under. There has got to be money provided to the portfolio.

Ms STITT: Well, as the Secretary has indicated, WorkSafe's annual report provides the details—

Mr D O'BRIEN: Anyway, the Secretary has taken it on notice, Minister. I will—

Ms FALKINGHAM: Okay. Just to be really clear, Mr O'Brien, there are no performance measures, because as I said, they all fall under the WorkSafe scheme, which is reported in their annual report.

Answer:

The Workplace Safety portfolio falls under the Advocacy, Human Rights and Victim Support group in the Department of Justice and Community Safety's output summary.

Portfolio:	Workplace Safety
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Committee member:	Mr Newbury
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Relevant text:

Mr NEWBURY: Terrific. Thank you. Mr Phemister, are you responsible for the Accident Compensation Conciliation Service? Is that Ms Falkingham?

Mr NEWBURY: Will employers be able to appear before hearings?

Ms STITT: Are you talking about the—

Mr NEWBURY: The conciliation service.

Ms STITT: The arbitration or conciliation? Because the conciliation service has existed for many years, but we have legislated to provide an arbitration function as an alternative to going to court. So you are talking about those—

Mr NEWBURY: Yes.

Ms STITT: Yes, okay. Well, the scheme has not yet commenced, but the ministerial guidelines do provide the ability for employers to self-represent at those hearings.

Mr NEWBURY: Okay. Thank you. Will training or upskilling be offered to insurers under the new arrangement?

Ms STITT: For agents, are you referring to? I might have to defer to the Secretary on that question, if that is okay.

Mr NEWBURY: Please. Fine. No worries.

Ms FALKINGHAM: We are working our way through that, Mr Newbury. That is an issue that has come up and we have heard really clearly right across stakeholders. So we will be in a position to announce details of that later in the year.

Mr NEWBURY: Would you mind just taking it on notice if there is anything else that you wanted to add in relation to the answer as you work it through?

Ms FALKINGHAM: Yes, of course.

Answer:

The Accident Compensation and Conciliation Service (ACCS) and the Department of Justice and Community Safety has been consulting with key stakeholders throughout 2021 and 2022 to inform the implementation of the new arbitration function within ACCS.

ACCS has been working closely with WorkSafe to support it to understand the new arbitration function, and to assist WorkSafe to identify and implement any necessary changes with their authorised agents.

ACCS is also working with WorkSafe to outline the skills and training required for authorised agents to participate in the arbitration process. This is informing work as to how ACCS and WorkSafe can assist self-insurers to prepare for the commencement of the arbitration function.