



24 September 2019



Reference: OIA-2019/20-0126

Dear 

Official Information Act request relating to the Department's usage of Psychometric Testing and associated costs between 1 July 2017 and 31 June 2019

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 2 September 2019. You requested:

- "1. A description of the types of occasions (for example assessing job applicants at point of recruitment, assessing staff as part of a management of change process) that your agency has used psychometric testing of job applicants and/or employees between 1 July 2017 and 31 June 2019.*
- 2. The total cost of the use of psychometric testing to your agency (for the avoidance of doubt this includes the cost of third parties arranging for the testing on your behalf) between 1 July 2017 and 31 June 2019.*
- 3. If your agency has engaged external organisations to conduct or analyse any psychometric testing during this period, the names of those organisations."*

I will endeavour to respond to each of your questions in turn.

Question One

In considering the appointment of an external candidate to a role we use a mix of assessment tools to objectively assess a candidate's ability to undertake aspects of a role. These assessments cover competencies such as numeracy, literacy, writing, Microsoft Office skills, and in some cases critical thinking. We also take into consideration team and cultural fit through the use of occupational personality questionnaires. The use of these tools is at the recruiting manager's discretion and is used towards the end of the process.

Psychometric assessments are also used for senior leaders who complete the Leadership Insight Programme. Leadership Insight is a common development assessment programme for leaders across the public sector since 2015. The programme is owned by the State Services Commission (SSC) and delivered in partnership with Cerno Ltd and the Leadership Development Centre. SSC will be providing the requested information for all agencies in relation to this request.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) has not used psychometric testing as part of a management of change process.

Question Two

DPMC does not hold the specified costs of psychometric testing, as these costs are built in to broader services received. However, we can advise the broader costs of the range of assessments detailed above.

In the 2017/18 Financial Year, DPMC appointed 67 external candidates to roles and spent \$40,330 on assessments.

In the 2018/19 Financial Year, DPMC appointed 78 external candidates to roles and spent \$26,820 on assessments.

Expenditure relating to the Leadership Insight Programme will be captured by the response being provided by SSC.

Question Three

As a small agency DPMC contracts out assessments. Between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2019 DPMC used Cerno for its Leadership Insight Programme and H2R for the broader testing referenced above.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Finally, for your information, this response will be published on the DPMC's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Clare Ward
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