

Concerns raised over 'People Matter' survey

June 09, 2017

In response to questions raised by Federation, the Department has confirmed in correspondence on 31 May that data from the "People Matter Survey" is provided to the Department in relation to the responses from individual workplaces with a certain number of employees.

The Federation was not advised that the data from the 2016 survey would be provided to the Department in this way. The Department claims that individual confidentiality is protected by the rules around minimum numbers of employees in any workplace, merging views of employees and reporting them as a percentage and ensuring no unique identifying information (such as name, date of birth, email address, etc.) is collected about any individual employee.

The Department stated "an independent research organisation, ORC International, is engaged by the Public Service Commission (PSC) to administer the survey and collect the results". This organisation has to operate within "research best practice and privacy legislation".

It is of significant concern that neither the Department nor the PSC made it clear to employees that the data collected would be disaggregated in this way in either the 2016 or 2017 survey.

The survey was previously conducted every two years and will now be conducted yearly. Federation has not been provided with a copy of the 2017 survey.

The previous surveys have provided some useful information including the findings of the 2016 survey in schools and TAFE concerning teacher views on stress, change management and bullying as follows. The results are given in the table.

The overall value of the survey remains unclear when there is little evidence of improvements in terms of these concerns.

Federation believes there should be transparency around how the survey is to be presented and used by the Department and TAFE. An over-emphasis on local issues will not address the systemic problems identifiable by the aggregated data.

Members should consider all relevant information before deciding whether to complete the survey. If members have already completed the survey and wish to raise issues about the use of the data then they should contact the Privacy Officer listed in the "ORC Australia Privacy Policy" and the Department.

Questions	Level of agreement	
	Teachers in schools	Teachers in TAFE
I feel that senior managers listen to employees	47%	22%
I feel that change is handled well in my organisation	50%	21%
I have confidence in the ways the organisation resolves grievances.	47%	35%
I am able to keep my work stress at an acceptable level	46%	42%
My organisation offers practical	41%	44%

employment arrangements and
conditions to help achieve work/life
balance

In the last 12 months I have witnessed bullying at work	40%	37%
In the last 12 months I have been subject to bullying at work	22%	20%