



Your tax paying for sleep classes

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TAXPAYERS are funding health seminars that teach public servants how to sleep well at night.

The Department of Parliamentary Services' staff training budget includes classes to inform staff about diabetes, cancer prevention and depression.

The department's annual report reveals the classes include advice on "getting a good night's sleep".

This comes after the *Herald Sun* revealed in August the Department of Human Services paid for "laughter exercises" and games to help its staff relax.

One Victorian Liberal Senator said it was a bit rich

for Australians to pay for sleep classes while they were up at night worrying about the cost of living.

While it is unclear what the cost of the "health-related" sleep seminars were, in 2010-11 Parliamentary Services spent about \$2.4 million suppliers for "staff-related and training" purposes — up \$475,000 on the previous year.

Department boss Alan Thompson said that parliamentary services was "very concerned about health and wellbeing of our staff".

During Finance and Public Administration Senate Estimates hearings

yesterday, the department also revealed it had spent about \$100,000 on reviews into the sale of billiard tables in Parliament House.

Concerns had been raised that the tables, which were sold last year for less than \$5000 collectively, may have had heritage significance.

Chair of the Finance and Public Administration committee, Victorian Liberal Senator Scott Ryan, said a taxpayer-funded sleep class "is a new one".

"While taxes fund public servants' sleep, Australian are up at night worrying about the soaring cost of living," Senator Ryan said.

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