

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 2 MARCH 2017 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Waste

Question reference number: 74 (HS 78)

Senator: Xenophon

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 21 April 2017

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Given that government and opposition politicians have all raised concerns over time and had policies on government waste:

- a) Is there a central government authority responsible for the elimination of waste?
- b) If so
 - i) Is there a government wide definition on the meaning of ‘waste’, and if so, what is that definition?
 - ii) How does this central government authority monitor and manage waste within the Department?
 - iii) Is there a central government mechanism (e.g. phone number, email address, web site) for public servants or contractors to report Departmental waste?
 - iv) How much Departmental waste was identified by the central government authority in FY 13/14, FY 14/15 and FY 15/16?
- c) If not:
 - i) Is there a departmental definition on the meaning of ‘waste’, and if so, what is that definition?
 - ii) What are the Department’s arrangements for monitoring and managing waste?
 - iii) Is there a central Departmental mechanism (e.g. phone number, email address, web site) for public servants or contractors to report Departmental waste?
 - iv) How much waste was identified by the Department in FY 13/14, FY 14/15 and FY 15/16?
- d) In either case:
 - i) Can Departmental officers or contractors report waste anonymously?
 - ii) Are they afforded a protection if they do so?

Answer:

- a) and b) Please refer to the Department of Finance's response to Additional Senate Estimates Question F128.
- c) Not applicable.
- d) Current and former public officials have the ability to make a disclosure of alleged wrong doing through the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (PID Act). A disclosure can be made anonymously and protections are provided to disclosers. The Commonwealth Ombudsman has responsibility for the PID Act.