

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2012-13 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: Cross

Question No: 309

Topic: Freedom of Information

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Boyce asked:

1. What is the total cost to the department/agency to process FOI requests for this financial year to date?
2. How many FOI requests has the Department received for this financial year to date? How many requests were denied and how many were granted?
3. Has the department failed to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests? If so, how many and why? Do any of these requests remain outstanding? If so, how many and why?

Answer:

1. Expenditure on FOI processing is calculated by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC), based on information submitted by the Department annually at the end of each financial year. Information about such expenditure is published in the OAIC's Annual Report. It is not possible for the Department to accurately calculate the costs of processing FOI requests for the financial year to date without diverting significant resources to the task.
2. The Department received 36 new FOI requests from 1 July to 1 November 2012. Of these 36 requests:
 - 17 have been finalised, of which:
 - 8 were granted (2 in full, 6 in part);
 - 2 were denied; and
 - 7 were either withdrawn or transferred to another agency.

As at 1 November 2012, the remaining 19 requests were still being processed in the Department. All of these requests are being processed within the statutory timeframes specified in the FOI Act.

3. The Department has not failed to meet the processing times specified in the FOI Act for any of the FOI requests that have been received by the Department from 1 July to 1 November 2012.