

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Additional Estimates

26 February 2014

**Question: AET 2775-2810**

**Topic: Freedom of Information (AASB)**

**Written: 5 March 2014**

**Senator LUDWIG asked:**

- 2775 Can the department please outline the process it under goes to access Freedom of Information requests?
- 2776 Does the department consult or inform the Minister when it receives Freedom of Information requests?
- If so, when?
  - If so, how does this occur?
- 2777 Does the department consult or inform other departments or agencies when it receives Freedom of Information requests?
- If so, which departments or agencies?
  - If so, when?
  - If so, how does this occur?
- 2778 Does the department consult or inform the Minister when or before it makes a decision on a Freedom of Information request?
- If so, when?
  - If so, how does this occur?
- 2779 Does the department consult or inform other departments or agencies when or before it makes a decision on a Freedom of Information request?
- If so, which departments or agencies?
  - If so, when?
  - If so, how does this occur?
- 2780 What resources does the department commit to its Freedom of Information team?
- 2781 List the staffing resources by APS level assigned solely to Freedom of Information requests
- 2782 List the staffing resources by APS level assigned indirectly to Freedom of Information requests
- 2783 Does the department ever second addition resources to processing Freedom of Information requests?
- If so, please detail those resources by APS level

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- 2784 How many officers are currently designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the department?  
a. How does this differ to the number of officers designated as at 6 September 2013?
- 2785 How many officers are currently designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the Minister's office?  
a. How does this differ to the number of officers designated as at 6 September 2013?
- 2786 Of the officers that are designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the Ministers office, how many are seconded officers from the department?
- 2787 What training does the department provide to designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act who work within the department?  
a. Of the officers designated as decision makers within the department, how many have received formal training?  
b. Of the officers designated as decision makers within the department, how many have received informal training?  
c. How long after each officers appointment as a designated decision maker did they receive formal training?  
d. What did the training involve?  
e. How long was the training?  
f. By whom was the training conducted?
- 2788 What training does the department provide to designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act who work within the Minister's office, excluding those officers on secondment from the department?  
a. Of the officers designated as decision makers, how many have received formal training?  
b. Of the officers designated as decision makers, how many have received informal training?  
c. How long after each officers appointment as a designated decision maker did they receive formal training?  
d. What did the training involve?  
e. How long was the training?  
f. By whom was the training conducted?
- 2789 Since 7 September 2013, how many Freedom of Information requests been shown or alerted to the Minister or their office?  
a. List those notified request  
b. How many instances were each of this requests brought to the office or the Minister's attention?  
c. How many of these items resulted in a separate formal brief being provided to the Minister?  
d. How many of these items resulted in a separate informal briefing (including by email) being provided to the Minister?  
e. How many requests have resulted in multiple formal briefs being provided to the Minister or their office?

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f. How many requests have resulted in multiple informal briefs (including by email) being provided to the Minister or their office?

- 2790 Does the department provide FOI PDFs for download on their website?
- 2791 If not, what is the cost associated with staffing to require monitor email and collate and forward requested FOI documents?
- 2792 How does the department test it is complying with accessibility standards for its websites?
- 2793 Does the department comply with accessibility standards for all its websites?
- 2794 What would be the effect on the accessibility rating of the department's website if FOI PDFs were provided on the department websites?
- 2795 What accessibility testing of the website was done and what were the points of failure prior to this change in access for FOI documents?
- 2796 Have the website accessibility standards been solely or partly responsible for not putting FOI PDF documents on the department websites?
- 2797 How does the department facilitate anonymous access to the FOI disclosure files?
- 2798 How many times were the last 20 FOI requests PDFs which were made available on the website downloaded? How often have the FOI requests only available by email request been sent?
- 2799 How long does it take to requests for disclosed FOI files to be processed? What was the average turnaround from request to sending of files in the last 3 months?
- 2800 What was the content of communications with other departments about the website accessibility standards and FOI PDFs?
- 2801 Where did advice concerning the website accessibility certification and provision of PDFs come from and what was the content of that advice?
- 2802 Does the department consider that not providing direct download of PDFs is more accessible for people with disabilities and the general public than providing the links?
- 2803 What efforts have been made to make FOI PDFs accessible to members of the public who have disabilities?
- 2804 Has advice from the information commissioner been sought regarding providing FOI requests available by email request only?

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- 2805 Has any disability advice group or consultant been contacted regarding making the FOI requests accessible to people with disabilities?
- 2806 Is this compatible with the information commissioner's guidelines- specifically that "published information should be accessible — in particular, it should comply with an agency's obligation to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Version 2)"
- 2807 How does email PDF provision meet the information commissioner's requirement that "13.124 Information that forms part of the IPS must be published 'to members of the public generally'"?
- 2808 Is not providing the FOI PDFs on the website a means of avoiding not conforming to the WCAG 2.0 or other guidelines?
- 2809 Does the department have a separate email address or inbox for receiving and responding to FOI requests?  
a. If so, list each email account  
b. List the officers who can assess and reply from those separate accounts, broken down by staffing classification level
- 2810 Do FOI officers ever receive or respond to applicants from their individual email account as opposed to from a central account?  
a. If so, how does the officer distinguish between communication related to their task as a decision maker and their primary work task ?  
b. How do FOI decision makers that receive emails related to FOI decisions in their normal work capacity distinguish these emails from FOI decision emails?

#### Answer:

- 2775 Requests are considered by one of the Research Directors in consultation with any relevant project managers [this depends on whether the FOI request relates to one or more particular project(s)]. If the information involves other parties (such as correspondence between the AASB and a constituent), the Research Director would contact those other parties as a courtesy and to help inform their decision. The applicant is informed of the decision within the statutory time limit(s). If the decision is to release information, that information is provided to the applicant and made accessible on the AASB's website within the statutory time limit(s). If the decision is a rejection, and the applicant seeks an internal review, the Research Director that did not make the initial decision carries out the internal review. The applicant is informed of the outcome of the internal review within the statutory time limit(s). If the outcome is to release information, that information is provided to the applicant and made accessible on the AASB's website within the statutory time limit(s).
- 2776 No. the types of questions we have received so far have not warranted informing the Minister.

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- 2777 Yes. if the information being sought affects another department or agency.  
a. those affected. For example ASIC  
b. as soon as practicable  
c. via email and/or telephone
- 2778 No. the types of FOI requests we have received so far have not warranted consulting the Minister.
- 2779 Yes. if the information being sought affects another department or agency.  
a those affected. For example ASIC  
b. as soon as practicable  
c. via email and/or telephone
- 2780 Currently the responsibility of one of the research directors.
- 2781 Only a small fraction of two research directors' time (SES equivalent) is devoted to FOI on an as-needed basis. The AASB places most of its information on matters of interest on its website. Accordingly, the AASB receives few FOI requests.
- 2782 see response to question 2781.
- 2783 No
- 2784 Two.  
a.The same.
- 2785 Do not know
- 2786 None
- 2787 Time to read background material and guidance.  
a. None  
b.Two  
c. not applicable  
d. not applicable  
e. not applicable  
f. not applicable
- 2788 Not applicable
- 2789 None
- 2790 No
- 2791 Minimal

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- 2792 The agency uses a combination of manual accessibility testing by trained staff, the funnel back accessibility checker and has a controlled process for website updates.
- 2793 Yes with the exception of the CMS and third party websites.
- 2794 None that we can determine
- 2795 Not applicable
- 2796 No
- 2797 An email address is required. Enquiries would presumably be able to seek files through a generic email address.
- 2798 None
- 2799 No experience in this matter
- 2800 none
- 2801 The agency refers to the Australian Government's Web Guide for advice on website accessibility standards.
- 2802 Yes
- 2803 The agency does not have FOI PDFs on its website.
- 2804 No
- 2805 No
- 2806 There may be documents in the disclosure log that are currently not available in HTML format. If people are unable to read the format provided they are asked to contact the agency for an alternative accessible format. The agency tries to meet all reasonable requests for an alternative format of the document in a timely manner and at the lowest reasonable cost.
- 2807 See response to question 2806
- 2808 No
- 2809 Yes
- a. [standard@asb.gov.au](mailto:standard@asb.gov.au)
  - b. Executive Assistant to the Research Director forwards the request to the Research Director

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- 2810 No
- a. Requests come via website contact
  - b. Requests come via website contact

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- 2782 see response to question 2781.
- 2783 No
- 2784 One  
a.The same.
- 2785 Do not know
- 2786 None
- 2787 Time to read background material and guidance.  
a. None  
b.one  
c. not applicable  
d. not applicable  
e. not applicable  
f. not applicable
- 2788 Not applicable
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