

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry and Science Portfolio
2015-16 Budget Estimates
3-4 June 2015

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: Previous Energy and Resources staffing numbers

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 4 June 2015, page 5-6)

QUESTION No.: BI-24

Senator KETTER: Ms Beauchamp, I am interested in obtaining a high-level staffing profile attached to programs 2.4 and 2.5. I am interested in a comparison between the current staff profile and what applied in the old Department of Energy, Resources and Tourism. Are you able to—

Ms Beauchamp: I can certainly give you an update—and I will ask the relevant people to come to the table—on the staffing profile for the resources and energy area. Comparing what we are doing now with what might have happened in a previous portfolio is probably not a fair comparison. Firstly, we have a very different and new policy agenda for this government. The other issue is that we share quite a few functions across the department—for example, setting up task forces which may not necessarily relate to the resources and energy area. We set up quite separately the task force on the energy white paper and drew people from within the department but also from other agencies. As we have just heard, we have quite a bit of work to do around radioactive waste and implementation of the energy white paper. I can go through the staffing profile of the resources and energy area, but I just want to reiterate that it is probably not fair to compare it to what was done previously.

Mr Ryan: For example, one of the areas of the department—the economic analysis division—does a lot of work in the resources and energy area, but it would be hard to split precisely what the resources are in that period that they actually work on resources and energy. But we can certainly cover the two key divisions.

Senator KETTER: Are you able to do that now or are you saying you will take it on notice?

Mr Ryan: We can do it now.

Ms Weston: I can give you the figures towards the end of May for the resources and energy divisions. As to what they were prior to the merger of the two departments in the machinery-of-government change, we will have to take that on notice. I note, though, in giving you these numbers that we have made some structural changes in the department in that the corporate network, for instance, is managed centrally. So resources that may have sat in those divisions when they were in a separate department are now centrally located. That will have an impact and so we will be comparing apples with oranges.

Senator Ronaldson: That was going to be my line!

Ms Weston: Sorry about that, Senator! To give you the detail there, the energy division as at 20 May has 163.99 full-time equivalent staff. I am going to give you the figures for the National Offshore Patrol Titles Administrator division separately to the resources division, but those two are related to each other. NOPTA at 20 May is at 34.14 FTEs and the resources division itself is at 93.4 FTEs.

Ms Beauchamp: I would also add, just to confirm, that we have other parts of the portfolio working on the resources and energy area. For example, under the Office of the Chief Economist we have a resources and energy economics branch. With two of the growth centres we have resources and energy expertise as well. They are not actually located in those divisions, but they are located in other parts of the portfolio.

Senator KETTER: Was that the case prior to 20 May? Or has it happened only since 20 May?

Ms Beauchamp: Yes, since the formation of the new department. And I should say that since 2011 the portfolio has gone through up to 16 iterations. We have put together a portfolio and a department that is certainly centred around government policy. We make sure we have a flexible arrangement in terms of the allocation of resources. Just looking at the resources of those two divisions is obviously not a fair comparison, as I said earlier. We have other parts of the portfolio working on resources and energy functions.

Senator KETTER: You have taken the question about the old department on notice.

Ms Weston: We will try to do those pulling-apart bits, but that might be—

Ms Beauchamp: I will just say that I do not think that is possible to do, given the change in policy priorities. But also things like corporate functions are combining back office functions and the like, so I do not think it is a fair comparison at all in terms of getting that information together, and obviously it would take a very long time to unpick. So, I would be reluctant to do that comparison.

Senator KETTER: Then perhaps just a comparison with the full-time equivalent numbers—

Ms Beauchamp: Let us have a look and see what we can do.

ANSWER

Since the creation of the new Department of Industry and Science as part of Machinery of Government changes in September 2013, the department has been through a subsequent Machinery of Government change. In addition, there have been a number of restructures within the Department to reflect the Australian Government's policy agenda, as well as the centralisation of core corporate services. As a result, resources and energy functions are distributed across the department from the resources and energy divisions, Office of the Chief Economist and service delivery areas of the department and consolidation of corporate functions. Therefore, any comparison of the energy and resources functions prior and post machinery of government changes is unable to be sensibly undertaken.