

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

2014 - 2015

Department/Agency: Treasury

Question: SBT 234-244

Topic: Freedom of Information – Consultation, Staffing Resources, FOI Disclosure Log

Reference: Written - 30 October 2014

Senator: Ludwig, Joe

Question:

The following questions relate to requests made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (the Act):

Consultations with other Departments, Agencies and the Minister

234. Other than for the purpose of discussing a transfer under section 16 of the Act, does the Department consult or inform other Departments or Agencies when it receives Freedom of Information requests?
235. If so, for each instance provide a table setting out the following information:
- a) The Department or Agency which was consulted;
 - b) The document;
 - c) The purpose of the consultation;
 - d) Whether an extension of time was sought from the applicant to allow time for the consultation, including whether it was granted and the length of the extension;
 - e) Whether an extension of time was sought from the Information Commissioner to allow time for the consultation, including whether it was granted and the length of the extension
236. Other than for the purposes of discussing a transfer under section 16 of the Act, has the Department consulted or informed the Minister's office about Freedom of Information requests it has received?
237. If yes, provide a table setting out the following information:
- a) The requests with respect to which the Minister or Ministerial office was consulted;
 - b) The Minister or Ministerial office which was consulted;
 - c) The purpose of the consultation;
 - d) Whether an extension of time was sought from the applicant to allow time for the consultation, including whether it was granted and the length of the extension;
 - e) Whether an extension of time was sought from the Information Commissioner to allow time for the consultation, including whether it was granted and the length of the extension
 - f) Whether any briefings (including formal briefs, email briefings and verbal briefings) were provided to the Minister's office

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Staffing resources

The following questions relate to the period from 18 September 2013:

238. For the period of time from 18 September 2013, what was the average FTE is allocated to processing FOI requests?

FOI Disclosure Log

239. For the purposes of meeting its obligations under 11C of the Act, does the Department or Agency:
- a) Maintain a webpage allowing download of documents released under section 11A (direct download)?
 - b) Require individuals to contact the Department or Agency to ask for the provision of those documents (request for provision)?
 - c) Facilitate to those documents in a different manner (if so, specify).
240. If the Department or Agency has moved from a system of meetings its 11C obligations by direct download, to a system of meeting those obligations by request for provision, provide the following information:
- a) The dates for which documents were made available for direct download, and the dates for which documents were made available through request for provision;
 - b) The total number of direct downloads of documents released under 11A the Departmental or Agency website;
 - c) The total number of requests for provision to documents that had been directly received, and how many had been processed by [date]?
 - d) What was the average FTE allocated to monitoring incoming email, collating and forwarding documents provided under a request for provision?
 - i. What was the approximate cost for salaries for the FTE staff allocated to this task?
241. Has the Department or Agency charged any for access to a document under section 11C (4)?
242. If so, please provide the following information in a table:
- a) On how many occasions charges have been imposed;
 - b) The amount charged for each document
 - c) The total amount charged;
 - d) What is the highest charge that has been imposed.

With respect to FOI requests:

243. How many documents were assessed (at internal review or - if internal review was not requested - by the original decision maker) as conditionally exempt?

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244. Of those, how many were:
- a) Released in full
 - b) Released in part
 - c) Refused access on the grounds that release of the document would be contrary to the public interest
 - d) Other (please specify)

Answer:

Consultations with other Departments, Agencies and the Minister

234. No.
235. N/A
236. Consistent with long-standing practice, the department provides a weekly report to the Treasury portfolio Ministers, which sets out the status of each FOI request on hand. No other consultation with the Ministers' offices is undertaken in relation to FOI requests received by the department and no briefings are provided to Ministers' offices.
237. Refer to SBT 234 above.

Staffing resources

238. For the period of time from 18 September 2013 to 30 October 2014, on average 4 FTE were allocated to processing FOI requests.

FOI Disclosure Log

239. a) Yes.
- b) No.
 - c) Access to documents can be provided in an alternative format (for example, by post or by inspection) if requested by the applicant.
240. N/A
241. No.
242. N/A

With respect to FOI requests:

243. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.
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