

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013-2014

Finance Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance

Outcome/Program: 3/3.1

Topic: Security Clearances

Senator: Wong

Question reference number: F145

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 17 January 2014

Number of pages: 3

Question:

1. Are staff in the offices of portfolio Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries required to obtain and maintain a minimum Negative Vetting Level 2 (formerly TOP SECRET) security clearance?
2. How many staff, per office, are yet to obtain these clearances?

Answer:

1. Yes – see attached Determination.
2. The Department notes that the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency has advised (as at November 2013) that the average time to process, evaluate and grant a Negative Vetting Level 2 security clearance is 7.5 months.

OFFICE	NUMBER
Abbott	46
Abetz	13
Andrews	15
Baldwin	5
Billson	14
Birmingham	6
Bishop	14
Brandis	7
Briggs	10
Cash	6
Chester	6
Ciobo	6

Colbeck	4
Cormann	16
Dutton	15
Fierravanti-Wells	6
Fifield	10
Fletcher	7
Frydenberg	7
Hartsuyker	10
Hockey	17
Hunt	13
Johnston	8
Joyce	10
Keenan	10
Ley	12
MacFarlane	14
Mason	5
McCormack	9
Morrison	11
Nash	11
Payne	12
Pyne	20
Robb	12
Robert	4
Ronaldson	13
Ryan	7
Scullion	8
Sinodinos	12
Truss	16
Tudge	6
Turnbull	13

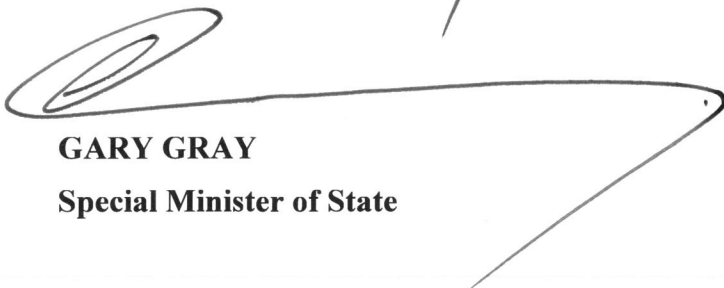
Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984

DETERMINATION REGARDING MINISTERIAL STAFF

I, GARY GRAY, Special Minister of State, for and on behalf of the Prime Minister determine under subsection 14(3) of the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (the Act) that:

1. Determination 2004-05/Part III/6 made on 30 August 2004 is revoked.
2. The following terms and conditions apply to the employment of the staff of Ministers employed under Part III of the Act:
 - (a) The employee must provide to the employing Minister, and keep up-to-date, a statement of private interests.
 - (b) Subject to clause 2(c), employment is conditional on the employee obtaining and maintaining a Negative Vetting Level 2 security clearance.
 - (c) In exceptional circumstances the Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department may, on the recommendation of the Minister's Chief of Staff and Portfolio Department, approve a variation of clause 2(b) of this determination where:
 - (i) in the case of an electorate officer who works to a Minister who is a member of the National Security Committee of Cabinet, the electorate officer has no access to security classified information above Protected; or
 - (ii) in the case of an electorate officer who works to a Minister who is not a member of the National Security Committee of Cabinet, the electorate officer has no access to security classified information above Secret.
 - (d) Where a variation has been issued in accordance with clause 2(c) of this determination, employment is conditional on the employee obtaining and maintaining a security clearance at a level required by the Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department, as advised by the Minister's Portfolio Department, in accordance with the *Australian Government Personnel Security Protocol*, as amended from time to time.

Dated this 30th day of *January* 2012



GARY GRAY
Special Minister of State