

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL  
AFFAIRS ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO**

**Program: General/Attorney General's Department**

**Question No. AE17/124**

**Senator Xenophon asked the following question at the hearing on 28 February 2017:**

Given that government and opposition politicians have all raised concerns over time and had policies on government waste:

1. Is there a central government authority responsible for the elimination of waste?
2. If so
  - a) Is there a government wide definition on the meaning of 'waste', and if so, what is that definition?
  - b) How does this central government authority monitor and manage waste within the Department?
  - c) Is there a central government mechanism (e.g. phone number, email address, web site) for public servants or contractors to report Departmental waste?
  - d) How much Departmental waste was identified by the central government authority in FY 13/14, FY 14/15 and FY 15/16?
3. If not:
  - a) Is there a departmental definition on the meaning of 'waste', and if so, what is that definition?
  - b) What are the Department's arrangements for monitoring and managing waste?
  - c) Is there a central Departmental mechanism (e.g. phone number, email address, web site) for public servants or contractors to report Departmental waste?
  - d) How much waste was identified by the Department in FY 13/14, FY 14/15 and FY 15/16?
4. In either case:
  - a) Can Departmental officers or contractors report waste anonymously?  
Are they afforded a protection if they do so?

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

1-2. This is a matter for the Department of Finance.

3. Not applicable

4. Conduct that results in the waste of money or property of the Commonwealth is a ground for making a disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013 (the PID Act). The PID Act allows for disclosures to be made anonymously. The PID Act provides for a range of protections for disclosers depending on the particular circumstances of the disclosure. Further questions about the scope or application of the PID Act should be directed to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.