

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2010
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 1

Hansard Ref: EC 50

Topic: Operational noise levels at Rockhampton Mail Centre

Senator Macdonald asked:

Can you provide information on what is being done to try to reduce the level of noise emanating from the Rockhampton mail facility?

I know the officers are going to come back to the residents, myself, and Ms Livermore. If you could take that on notice to send me a note on that, that might curtail the matter.

Answer:

Australia Post wrote to Senator Macdonald and other interested parties on 16 November 2010 to recap on the measures that Australia Post has taken to date to reduce operational noise emissions from the Rockhampton Mail Centre (copy attached).

Concerning the independent noise assessment that is mentioned in the letter, while an interim report from the acoustic engineer was received on 24 November 2010, which identified noise emissions exceeding the applicable limit, the final report with noise mitigating recommendations is not expected to be received until mid-December 2010.

Once Australia Post has received the final report and had a chance to consider its recommendations, it will contact Senator Macdonald and Ms Livermore MP to outline the further measures it intends to take to address local residents' concerns.

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ATTACHMENT



AP Ref: CSG10/746

16 November 2010

Senator the Hon Ian Macdonald
Senator for Queensland
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Dear Senator Macdonald

I refer to our discussions at the recent Senate Estimates hearing in Canberra and your subsequent letter of 9 November 2010 concerning operational noise levels at the Rockhampton Mail Centre.

Just to recap on our previous advice, and for the benefit of the Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications who also requested advice on this matter, hereunder is a list of the long-term measures Australia Post has taken to date to reduce operational noise levels at the mail centre:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| July 2008: | constructed a timber fence around the mail centre boundary |
| Aug 2010: | re-routed a mail transport truck so that a smaller vehicle arrives at the mail centre some two hours later than previously |
| Aug 2010: | commenced taking all vehicles to the front of the loading dock for inspections, rather than to the back of the property, as previously occurred |
| Sep 2010: | purchased two-way radios for use on loading docks so staff no longer have the need to call out instructions |
| Oct 2010: | introduced set shifts for loading docks, which provides for dedicated staff who enforce the mail centre's noise reduction plan |
| Monthly: | introduced briefing sessions to remind staff of the need to keep all operational noise levels to a minimum, including lifting mail carrying devices, rather than pushing or dragging them. |

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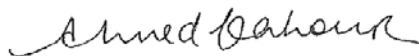
More recently, following on from the face-to-face meeting at the mail centre on 8 October 2010 – which was attended by you, Ms Kirsten Livermore MP, representatives from the Rockhampton Council and several local residents – Australia Post engaged an acoustic engineer to conduct active noise level readings at the mail centre.

The readings were taken at the mail centre on the evening of Tuesday 9 November 2010 and we expect to receive the acoustic engineer's report during the week commencing 22 November 2010.

Once we have received the report and had an opportunity to consider any recommendations it contains, we will write to you and Ms Livermore to outline the findings of the report and any further practicable measures we can take concerning this matter.

Once again, I would like to assure you that Australia Post is mindful of the noise levels that can be experienced by residents living within the vicinity of a commercial precinct and a major highway and will continue to work closely with all interested parties in an effort to address any ongoing concerns.

Yours sincerely



AHMED FAHOUR

CC Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications & the Digital Economy

Chair, Senate Standing Committee on Environment & Communications

Ms Kirsten Livermore MP, Member for Capricornia

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Question No: 2

Hansard Ref: EC 52

Topic: Corporate Responsibility Program – Driver environmental awareness initiatives

Senator Wortley asked:

I understand that there were three different training methods that were used as part of the corporate responsibility program and that the one being adopted is the E-Drive online program.

What are the other two training methods that were used?

Answer:

In addition to E-learning, the other two training methods evaluated were Traditional (classroom instruction followed by on-the-job assessment) and Combined (classroom instruction followed by on-line assessment). The E-learning method produced the best results overall.

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Question No: 3

Hansard Ref: EC 53

Topic: Media reports of proposed closure of retail outlets

Senator Williams asked:

It has been mentioned in the press that Australia Post will close some retail outlets in areas with declining populations. Is that true?

Answer:

Australia Post regularly reviews its retail network to ensure that it continues to meet its regulated community service obligations and customers' expectations in a commercially sound manner. It is required to maintain a minimum of 4,000 postal outlets including 2,500 in rural and remote areas.

In areas with declining populations, closures do occasionally occur and are typically due to the licensee closing down the host business. In such cases, Australia Post works with the local community to try to find a replacement licensee or, if no one is interested in taking on the licence, to introduce alternative arrangements.

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Question No: 4

Hansard Ref: EC 59

Topic: Cost of new Headquarters Building

Senator Cameron asked:

Can you provide details of the expenditure involved in the lease and furnishing of your new headquarters at 111 Bourke Street in 2009/10 and what you expect to spend on your head office in the next 12 months?

Answer:

The following table details the net operating and capital fit out costs for the new headquarters building in 2009/10 and 2010/11:

	2009/10	2010/11 (projected)
Net operating costs	\$15.2m (part year occupancy)	\$20.6m (full year occupancy)
Capital fit out costs	\$8.9m	\$0.5m

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Question No: 5

Hansard Ref: EC 59

Topic: Expenditure on IT systems and other equipment

Senator Cameron asked:

Can you provide details of expenditure on the renewal of your IT systems and equipment generally within Australia Post?

Answer:

The following table details Australia Post's expenditure on IT systems and other equipment for the last three financial years:

Category	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
IT Hardware	\$28,274,384	\$19,386,907	\$10,615,937
Software Development	\$50,514,865	\$74,772,254	\$110,571,402
Software Licences	\$28,282,706	\$24,742,887	\$14,125,769
Total	\$107,071,955	\$118,902,048	\$135,313,108

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Question No: 6

Hansard Ref: EC 60

Topic: Executive Remuneration 2009/10

Senator Macdonald asked:

How do the board and SES officers justify an 11% increase in their take home pay when profits have fallen by 73% against a revenue fall of 2% in the same period?

Answer:

Remuneration for Australia Post's non-executive directors (the board, with the exception of the Managing Director) is determined by the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal. For 2009/10, the Remuneration Tribunal determined an increase of 4%.

Remuneration arrangements for the Managing Director and CEO are determined by the board, following a set of principles approved by the Remuneration Tribunal. Remuneration arrangements for other senior executives are determined by the Managing Director and CEO within parameters set by the Human Resources Committee, having regard to advice sought annually from independent specialised remuneration consultants to ensure payments are in line with market practice.

The 11% referred to in the question does not represent a direct year-on-year comparison of pay increases and bonuses to senior executives as it includes leave accruals and pay increases based on changes to job functions and responsibilities. In 2009/10, Australia Post held pay adjustments to 2% for senior executives and the pay out on individual performance bonuses was less than the previous financial year.

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Question No: 7

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Australia Post Board

Senator Abetz asked:

1. Two Directors were appointed to the Australia Post Board in the final hours of the last government. How did the government select these two Directors? Do they have any experience in the postal industry?
2. When will the next vacancy occur? Will Australia Post be following the lead of postal corporations overseas by seeking to have directors who are specialists in the postal sector?

Answer:

1. The two new directors who were appointed to the Australia Post Board in July 2010 – Mrs Jennifer Seabrook and the Hon Trish White - were selected in accordance with the requirements of section 73 of the *Australian Postal Corporation Act 1989* and section 3.4 of the Governance Arrangements for Commonwealth Government Business Enterprises, both of which can be viewed at www.dbcde.gov.au

The Minister nominated the new directors on the basis that they would expand the depth of commercial expertise on the Board. The backgrounds of the two new directors were detailed in the Joint Media Release by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy on 16 July 2010, a copy of which can be viewed at www.dbcde.gov.au

2. A vacancy arose on the Board in September 2010. In filling the next vacancy, the Minister will consider all candidates, having regard to the need to ensure the Board collectively possesses an appropriate balance of skills (such as commerce, finance, accounting, law, marketing, workplace relations and management).

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Question No: 8

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Australia Post Annual Report

Senator Abetz asked:

1. In media reports following the tabling of Australia Post's Annual Report, the MD was quoted as saying that there may be a need to close some post offices. If this is indeed the case, will Australia Post be consulting with the CEPU and POAAL prior to making closures?
2. The Annual Report notes that while total international letter volumes increased by 11.2%, revenue was down by 3.8% because the value of payments made by overseas postal services in return for Australia Post delivering incoming mail diminished against the strong Australian dollar. Is Australia Post able to take any steps to remedy this situation? Is Australia Post losing money for every overseas parcel it delivers in Australia?
3. Does Australia Post anticipate improved results in 2010/11 because of the increase in the base rate of postage?

Answer:

1. When Australia Post is proposing to close a postal outlet, it consults with the local community and other relevant stakeholders prior to making the change.
2. The payment Australia Post receives can vary based on the sending country and in some cases, the amount received does not recover all of the costs incurred. Australia Post is actively pursuing strategies including those available within the Universal Postal Union system and through bi-lateral arrangements with key trading partners.
3. The domestic reserved letter service continues to operate in a very challenging market and recorded a loss of \$210.9m in 2009/10. While the last increase to the basic postage rate (and other domestic reserved letter prices) will improve the financial position of the domestic reserved letter service, it will not return the domestic reserved letter service to profit.

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Question No: 9

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Future Ready

Senator Abetz asked:

Can Australia Post's Managing Director explain the benefits of Australia Post's new "Future Ready" project and how it will improve the Corporate, Licensed and Franchised networks as well as mail contracts and delivery?

Answer:

Detailed information about Australia Post's Future Ready program is available on its corporate website www.auspost.com.au and in its 2009/10 Annual Report.

The Future Ready business renewal program is designed to ensure Australia Post is a sustainable business that meets the changing needs of its customers.

The program will build a foundation for long-term growth through the development of new business opportunities and cost control strategies. The new streamlined structure will ensure timely decisions are made and that the business is more responsive to market demands.

The retail and delivery networks are integral parts of Australia Post's business and, as such, are expected to benefit from the new business opportunities/profit growth being pursued under the program.

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Question No: 10

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: AQIS

Senator Abetz asked:

At the May Senate Estimates, we discussed the substantial increase in fees that Australia Post pays AQIS for quarantine checks. Has Australia Post decided how this will be funded? Or will it come out of the dividend paid to the government?

Answer:

Australia Post is still considering its position in relation to this matter.

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Question No: 11

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: AUSTRAC

Senator Abetz asked:

In the federal budget earlier this year, it was announced that AUSTRAC would be charging all “reporting entities” under the Anti-Money Laundering/Counter Terrorism Financing Act would be charged \$500 a year. The Government has since backed down, and should soon be consulting with interested parties on a proposed fee structure.

Has AUSTRAC consulted with Australia Post about the proposed fee structure for Reporting Entities under the AML/CTF Act?

Has Australia Post calculated the impact of AUSTRAC’s proposed fee on its corporate and Licensed Post Office network?

Answer:

Australia Post and AUSTRAC are in regular contact in relation to a number of matters associated with the AML/CTF Act.

Based on the original fee structure proposed by AUSTRAC, Australia Post estimated the costs to be in the order of \$2.3m per annum.

More recently, Australia Post has reviewed AUSTRAC’s alternative cost recovery model and participated in its industry consultation forums.

Australia Post has calculated the cost of the revised model and acknowledges that, while there would be associated compliance costs arising from required substantial business process changes, with the licensed post office network no longer being subject to the levy, the proposed fee structure would have a reduced financial impact.

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Question No: 12

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Delivering mail for other carriers

Senator Abetz asked:

1. Does Australia Post perform “last mile” delivery for any other carriers such as DHL or FedEx?
2. Under what circumstances? How does Australia Post balance competition with cooperation?

Answer:

1. Australia Post provides “last mile” delivery for other carriers such as DHL, UPS, Fastway and AaE.
2. Australia Post performs this work when it is mutually beneficial and commercially viable to do so, subject to commercial terms and conditions.

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Question No: 13

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Australia Post Headquarters

Senator Abetz asked:

1. Australia Post has responded to questions at previous Senate Estimates hearings in regard to the new Headquarters in Melbourne, advising that the fit-out would cost the corporation in the region of \$70 million. What did the fit-out end up costing and has it been completed?
2. Does Australia Post lease or own any other premises for administration in Melbourne and if so is it intended that all Victorian State and all National operations be operated from the new premises in Bourke Street?

Answer:

1. The fit out has been completed at a total cost of \$54.5m, against the original budget of \$66.9m.
2. Yes, there are two leased and one owned property that are used for administrative purposes. The leases on the properties at 123 Lonsdale Street (564 sqm) and 150 Lonsdale Street (1126 sqm) will not be renewed when they expire in March 2012 and May 2013 respectively. The owned property at Roslyn Street West Melbourne, which is a purpose built facility that is used as a Shared Services and specialised IT Data Centre, will be retained.

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Question No: 14

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Australia Post Restructure

Senator Abetz asked:

1. Have all the management positions been filled at Australia Post Headquarters and in the State Administrations since the new MD has taken over?
2. Are there any new external appointments and what experience do they have in the postal, retail or franchise worlds?
3. How does Australia Post see the new structure improving Australia Post?

Answer:

1. Not all management positions have yet been filled. The restructure is still progressing, with a targeted completion date of February 2011.
2. There have been 17 external management appointments to date. All of the successful candidates were deemed by the selection panel to have the appropriate skills, capabilities and experience to meet the current and future needs of their positions and Australia Post.
3. The new structure aligns Australia Post to a new business model that provides greater focus on its customers and their requirements. It will also allow Australia Post to address the key challenges and opportunities facing the business as a result of generational change in the communications market such as restoring the letters business (in the face of declining volumes) to self-sustaining levels and taking advantage of opportunities in the growing online market.

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Question No: 15

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Retail Outlets and Mail/Parcel Contracts

Senator Abetz asked:

1. How many corporate post offices were converted to Licensed Post Offices during the 2009/10 financial year? Please supply details.
2. How many Licensed Post Offices were converted to Community Agencies during the 2009/10 financial year? Please supply details.
3. How many Community Agencies were closed during the 2009/10 financial year? Please supply details.
4. How many mail or parcel contractors resigned their contracts during 2009/10? Please also give figures for the previous three financial years.
5. How many disputes between mail contractors and Australia Post have been resolved through the dispute resolutions process set out in the mail contract?

Answer:

1. The following six corporate outlets were converted to licensed post offices during 2009/10 - Orbost (Vic); Boonah, Moranbah and Prosperine (Qld); Canningvale East (WA) and Christies Beach (SA).
2. The following 12 licensed post offices were converted to community agencies during 2009/10 - Carrathool, Federal, Lochinvar, Palmers Island, Rock Valley, Scotts Head, Terranora, Wardell and Warriwillah (NSW); Aloomba and Flying Fish Point (Qld); Bullaring (WA).
3. The following 19 community agencies were closed during 2009/10 – Builyan, Endeavour Falls, Injanoo, Kalunga, Marmor, Meringandan and Prairie (Qld); Babakin, Beagle Bay, Moulyinning, South Kumminin, Tardun, Yiyili and Yuna (WA); Euabalong, Halfway Creek and Tyndale (NSW); Halidon and The Pines (SA).

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4. The following table details the number of delivery contractors that resigned their contracts (either by assignment to another entity or termination on 90 days notice) during the past four financial years:

Year	Assigned to another entity (with AP approval)	Terminated on 90 days notice
2009-10	216	100
2008-09	292	174
2007-08	387	307
2006-07	341	497

5. The dispute resolution process requires both parties to meet and enter into good faith discussions with a view to resolving the dispute. Most disputes are resolved through this initial meeting at the local level. However, during the 2009-10 financial year, seven disputes were resolved through further discussions with the contractors and four disputes remain active. No disputes have been referred to arbitration.

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Question No: 16

Hansard Ref: EC 56 and In Writing

Topic: Stamp Series

Senator Abetz asked:

What is the most popular stamp series each year over the period since 2000/01 to date?

Answer:

The most popular stamp series, based on sales revenue, for the years in question were as follows - Olympic Sports (2000), Wild Babies (2001), Magic Rainforests (2002), Bugs and Butterflies (2003), Cats and Dogs (2004), Down on the Farm (2005), Driving Through the Years - Nostalgic Cars (2006), Zodiac (2007), Centenary of Rugby League (2008) and Australian Legends – Legends of the Screen (2009).

Since 2007, Australia Post has conducted a “Favourite Stamp Poll”, which gives collectors and the public the chance to vote for their favourite stamp issue in the past year. The winners over the last three years were as follows – Botanic Gardens (2007), Border Collie – Working Dogs (2008) and Songbirds (2009).

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Question No: 17

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Australia Post Headquarters

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. From what address does the headquarters for Australia Post currently operate out of?
2. How many staff are located there?
3. Who is the manager of the State Division?
4. What is the annual cost of this office?
5. What has been the cost over the past five financial years, broken down by year?
6. Has there been a review into the ongoing operation of this office? When?
7. Are there any plans to move this office to elsewhere in Tasmania? Or interstate?
8. Are there any plans to merge the Victorian and Tasmanian division head offices?
9. Where would the head office be under this plan?
10. If the plan is to go ahead, what will be the cost saving?
11. How many staff will be made redundant?
12. Will there still be a divisional office in Tasmania?

Answer:

1. Australia Post's Headquarters building is at 111 Bourke Street, Melbourne.
2. As at November 2010, 1282 staff were at the location.
3. Mr Peter Bass is State Manager Operations VIC/TAS, Network and Transport and Mr Glenn O'Bryan is Regional Manager VIC/TAS, Retail Sales and Services.

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- 4&5. The following table details the total cost of operating the VIC/TAS state office over the last five financial years:

Year	Cost
2006/07	\$28.112m
2007/08	\$27.729m
2008/09	\$25.107m
2009/10	\$20.016m
2010/11 (projected)	\$17.841m

6. There has been no review into the ongoing operation of the VIC/TAS state office. However, management structures and support resources are constantly reviewed to ensure efficiency throughout any state office. A structural review is currently being undertaken.
- 7-11. There are no current plans to move or merge the Victorian and Tasmanian divisional offices.
12. Yes, Australia Post will retain a divisional office in Tasmania.

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Question No: 18

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Contractors – Australia Post

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Has the department/agency ever employed Hawker Britton in any capacity or is it considering employing Hawker Britton? If yes, provide details.
2. Has the department/agency ever employed Shannon's Way in any capacity or is it considering employing Shannon's Way? If yes, provide details.
3. Has the department/agency ever employed John Utting & UMR Research Group in any capacity or is it considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group? If yes, provide details.
4. Has the department/agency ever employed McCann-Erickson in any capacity or is it considering employing McCann-Erickson? If yes, provide details.
5. Has the department/agency ever employed Cutting Edge in any capacity or is it considering employing Cutting Edge? If yes, provide details.
6. Has the department/agency ever employed Ikon Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing Ikon Communications? If yes, provide details.
7. Has the department/agency ever employed CMAX Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing CMAX Communications? If yes, provide details.
8. Has the department/agency ever employed Boston Consulting Group in any capacity or is it considering employing Boston Consulting Group? If yes, provide details.
9. Has the department/agency ever employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity or is it considering employing McKinsey & Company? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

- 1-9. Australia Post had a minor engagement with Hawker Britton in 2008 for business consulting advice in relation to Messenger Post Road Transport Services.

Australia Post engaged the Boston Consulting Group in 2010. Boston Consulting Group's primary focus was on Australia Post's Future Ready strategy, which is a five-year strategic business renewal program that aims to make the corporation more customer focussed and sustainable. Refer to Questions No 9 and 14 for additional information about the Future Ready program.

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Question No: 19

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Subscriptions – Australia Post

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Does your department or agencies within your portfolio subscribe to pay TV (for example Foxtel)? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what channels.
2. Does your department or agencies within your portfolio subscribe to newspapers? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what newspapers.
3. Does your department or agencies within your portfolio subscribe to magazines? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what magazines.

Answer:

- 1-3. Australia Post does not maintain a centralised record of subscriptions to pay TV, newspapers or magazines. These types of subscriptions are approved at the local level for business-related purposes.

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Question No: 20

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Advertising and Marketing – Australia Post

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. How much has the Department and portfolio agencies spent on advertising and marketing since Budget Estimates? Ask for justification of expenditure.
2. Could the Department provide a complete list of current contracts. Please indicate the rationale for each service provided and its intended use.
3. What communications programs have the Department and portfolio agencies undertaken since additional estimates and what communications programs are planned to be undertaken? For each program, what is the total spend?

Answer:

1. Australia Post spent a total of \$2.24m on advertising and marketing (creative) services between 10 May and 10 October 2010.
2. Australia Post currently has contracts with the following companies, which it may call on to provide advertising, market research, public relations and promotions - Badjar Ogilvy P/L, Grey Worldwide P/L, 303 Group P/L, Clemenger BBDO (Brisbane) P/L, Comunicado Marketing Communications P/L, Cubed Communications, Growth Solutions Group, MercerBell P/L, Publicis Mojo P/L, Singleton Ogilvy Mather (Sydney) P/L, Zebra Direction P/L, Alliance Strategic Research, AMR Interactive P/L, Colmar Brunton P/L, Inside Story, Roy Morgan Research, Sweeney Research P/L, The Leading Edge Market Research Consultants P/L, The NTF Group P/L, Open Mind Research Group, Roberts Research Group P/L, Comunicado Marketing Communications P/L, Currie Communications P/L, Haystack Public Affairs P/L, Scaffidi Hugh-Jones, Senioragency Australia P/L, The Reputation Group P/L, Undertow Media, ACP Magazines Ltd, AT Media P/L, Brox Holdings P/L, Coombes Whitechurch Design, Grant Day James, M2 Technology P/L, The Nielsen Co P/L, Torque Solutions (Australia) P/L, Universal McCann Mediabrands Australia P/L, Wright Engagement P/L, Amanda Roach Design P/L, Brand Business P/L, Australian Charities Fund, CI Events, Edge Custom Media, Exponet P/L, Melbourne Stadiums Ltd.
3. Australia Post has not undertaken, and is not planning to undertake, any “Communications Programs”, as defined in QoN 59 from the May 2010 Senate Estimates Hearings.

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Question No: 21

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing Levels - Australia Post

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. What is the total expenditure on staffing for the Department and for all portfolio agencies? What is the SES and non-SES breakdown?
2. What are the current staffing levels for SES and non-SES officers?
3. How many SES were employed in your Department and portfolio agencies on 18 October 2010?
4. How many SES were employed in your Department and portfolio agencies as of today?
5. What is the breakdown by each level (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?
6. What is the gender breakdown by each level (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?
7. What is the breakdown by location for each level (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?
8. What is the breakdown by each level of ongoing staff and non-ongoing staff (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band)?
9. What has been the general staffing trend in your department and portfolio agencies since the 2007 election (for example SES numbers and recruitment has increased by X per cent because of Y).
10. What have been the changes in staffing levels since Budget Estimates 2010? Why have these changes occurred? What have been the Budgetary implications? In the case of reductions in staff numbers, how have these reductions been absorbed by the Department? What functions these staff performed have been sacrificed and why?

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11. Are there expected changes to current staffing levels over the next 12 months? If yes, provide details including a breakdown of each level staff (each SES band, each Executive Level band and each APS band) detailing the changes. Will this be different to what was reported in the 2010-11 Budget?
12. Has there been a target for staff reductions to achieve savings? What is that target and what strategy is being implemented to achieve this? Will staff reductions be used to achieve the Government's election commitment to maintain the 1.25 per cent efficiency dividend?
13. Have any voluntary or involuntary redundancies been offered to staff? If so, how have staff been identified for such offers? Are there such plans for the future?
14. How many permanent staff recruited since Budget Estimates 2010? What level are these staff? Where is their location?
15. Since Budget Estimates 2010, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?
16. Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the current efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts since Budget Estimate s2010? If so, where and at what level?
17. Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details i.e. reduction target, how this will be achieved, services/programs to be cut etc.
18. If your Department/agency has been identified in the 2010 election as delivering efficiencies (savings), how will these be delivered? (for example, savings commitments included reducing program funding, rationalising grants etc how will these impact the department and staffing)
19. What changes are underway or planned for graduate recruitment, cadetships or similar programs? If reductions or increases are envisaged please explain including reasons, target numbers etc.

Answer:

- 1-19. As a GBE, Australia Post does not use SES/APS bands to classify its staff; staff changes do not have any budgetary implications; and it is not subject to the government's efficiency dividend.

Information about Australia Post's executive structure and the number of staff employed to provide postal services at 30 June each year is included in its annual reports, which can be viewed on its corporate website www.auspost.com.au

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
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Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 22

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Government payment of accounts – Australia Post

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Has the department/agency paid its accounts to contractors/consultants etc in accordance with Government policy in terms of time for payment (i.e.within 30 days)? If not, why not, and what has been the timeframe for payment of accounts? Please provide a breakdown, average statistics etc as appropriate to give insight into how this issue is being approached.)
2. For accounts not paid within 30 days, is interest being paid on overdue amounts and if so how much has been paid by the portfolio/department agency for the current financial year and the previous financial year?
3. Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

Answer:

- 1-3. As a Government Business Enterprise, Australia Post is not subject to the Government's policy on the payment of contractor/consultant accounts.

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Question No: 23

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Travel Costs – Australia Post

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. The 2009-10 Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook detailed a whole-of-government coordinated procurement arrangements for travel and related services. How has this applied to your department and portfolio agencies? Please explain the changes that have occurred to your department and portfolio agencies in relation to its travel and related services.
2. Is purchasing of travel and related services less expensive under the new arrangements?
3. Is purchasing of travel and related services more efficient under the new arrangements?
4. Have savings been achieved in your portfolio because of the new arrangements?
5. How much did your department and portfolio agencies spend on travel in 2008-09, 2009-10 and to date this financial year.
6. How have staff within your department and portfolio agencies found the new arrangements? For example, is it more efficient to arrange travel?

Answer:

- 1-6. As a Government Business Enterprise, Australia Post is not subject to the Government's procurement arrangements for travel and related services.