

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Budget Estimates Hearings October 2010**

**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**

**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 144**

**CFO Group**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Whole-of-government departmental efficiencies**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. The 2009-10 Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook detailed whole-of-government departmental efficiencies. How has this applied to your department and portfolio agencies? Can you provide details of how these efficiencies will be achieved? Please provide specific examples.
2. Will the implementation of the Government's election commitment to maintain the 1.25 per cent efficiency dividend impact on your department or portfolio agencies ability to meet the efficiencies outlined in the 2009-10 Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook?
3. Have any voluntary or involuntary redundancies been offered to staff to meet the 2009-10 Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook detailed whole-of-government departmental efficiencies in your portfolio? If so, please provide details? Are there such plans for the future?

**Answer:**

1. The Department reviews its internal budget on an annual basis taking into account all changes to funding from new policy measures. In the case of the 2009-10 Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook whole-of-government departmental efficiencies savings measures, savings have been met through a number of approaches, including restructuring ongoing divisional administrative support arrangements.
2. As indicated above, the Department reviews its internal budget on an annual basis taking into account all changes to funding from new policy measures. The impact of the Government's election commitment to maintain the 1.25 per cent efficiency dividend will be considered when developing the Department's 2011-12 internal budget.
3. There were some voluntary redundancies associated with the restructuring of ongoing divisional administrative support arrangements. At this time, the Department has no specific plans for further redundancies.

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**Question No: 145**

**CFO Group**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Efficiency Dividend**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Has your portfolio started implementing the Government's savings election commitment of maintaining the annual efficiency dividend on departmental expenses at 1.25 per cent? If not, why not? If yes, give details.
2. Will any agencies in your portfolio be seeking an exemption to implementing the efficiency dividend?
3. How do you think you will implement it? Give examples of the types of cuts you will make (i.e. no more pot plants in departmental buildings).
4. Will there be cuts to staff? If yes, give details.

**Answer:**

1. No. The Department reviews its internal budget on an annual basis taking into account all changes to funding from new policy measures.
2. No.
3. The impact of the Government's election commitment to maintain the 1.25 per cent efficiency dividend will be considered when developing the Department's 2011-12 internal budget, taking into account all decisions made during the Government's consideration of the 2011-12 Budget.
4. As the Budget outcome for the Department becomes clearer, the staffing requirement will be assessed and, if necessary, the Department will work to redeploy any potentially excess staff to alternate roles within the Department.

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**Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio**  
**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**

**Question No: 146**

**CFO Group**

**Hansard Ref: In Writing**

**Topic: Government Payment of Accounts - DBCDE**

**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)?
- (2) If not, why not, and what has been the timeframe for payment of accounts?
- (3) Please provide a breakdown, average statistics etc as appropriate to give insight into how this issue is being approached.)
- (4) 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?
- (5) Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

**Answer:**

Senator Birmingham – The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the answer below to the honourable Senator’s question. The answer provides data for the period 1 May 2010 through 30 September 2010, noting that the answer to the honourable Senator Bartlett’s question No 166 in the Budget Estimates Hearings May 2010 provided data for the period 1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010.

- (1) Yes, 576 payments or 95% of payments to contractors and consultants were made within 30 days of receipt of a correctly rendered invoice.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Average number of days for all payments to contractors and consultants is 10.63 days.
- (4) In line with Finance Circular No 2008/10, interest is payable to small business where “the amount of interest is more than \$10 and the contractor has issued a correctly rendered invoice for the interest”. No invoices have been received.
- (5) Not applicable.