

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 101

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Freedom of Information

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Has the Agency received any advice on how to respond to FOI requests?
- b. How many FOI requests has the Agency received for the year 2010-11? How many have been granted or denied?
- c. How many conclusive certificates have been issued in relation to FOI requests for the year 2010-11?
- d. How many FOI requests has the Agency received for this FYTD? How many have been granted or denied?
- e. How many conclusive certificates have been issued in relation to FOI requests for this FYTD?

Answer:

- a. At various times, Australia Post has sought expert external advice on technical aspects of the Freedom of Information Act, but not in the last 12 months.
- b. These details are included in Australia Post's 2010-11 Annual Report.
- c. None.
- d. In the FYTD, Australia Post has received 33 applications, granted access in full to 27 applications and granted access in part to 1 application. Access was refused to 3 applications and 2 applications were withdrawn.
- e. None.

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Question No: 102

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Monitoring

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What was the total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera, provided to the Agency for the year 2010-11?
- b. Which agency or agencies provided these services?
- c. What is the estimated budget to provide these same services for the year 2011-12?
- d. What has been spent providing these services FYTD?

Answer:

- a. \$242,949
- b. Media Monitors
- c. \$253,000
- d. \$89,858

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Question No: 103

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Social Media

Senator Fisher asked:

Has there been any changes to agency social media or protocols about staff access and usage of YouTube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since May 2011? Please explain.

Answer:

No.

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Question No: 104

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Contractors

Senator Fisher asked:

Since May 2011:

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

Answer:

- 1-9. Since May 2011, Australia Post has engaged McCann Erickson to perform media buying on behalf of Australia Post and engaged Boston Consulting Group to provide consultancy advice on eServices, under its Future Ready program.

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Question No: 105

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Payment of Accounts

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. For the year 2010-11, did the 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.)
- b. For accounts not paid within 30 days, was interest being paid on overdue amounts and if so how much has been paid by the portfolio agency for the current financial year and the previous financial year?
- c. Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

Answer:

- a-c. 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: 106

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Payment of Accounts

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. For the FYTD, has the 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.)
- b. 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 agency for the current financial year and the previous financial year?
- c. Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

Answer:

- a-c. 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: 107

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Stationery Requirements

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How much was spent by the agency on the government (Ministers/Parliamentary Secretaries) stationery requirements in your portfolio (i.e. paper, envelopes, with compliments slips) in 2010-11?
- b. What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?

Answer:

a-b. Australia Post did not spend any money in 2010-11 and will not spend any money in 2011-12 on the government's stationery requirements.

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Question No: 108

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Subscriptions

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Does the agency subscribe to pay TV (for example Foxtel)?
- b. If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what channels.
- c. What was the cost for 2010-11?
- d. What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?

Answer:

- a-d. These types of subscriptions are approved at the local level for business-related purposes. The specific details sought in respect of cost and channels across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 109

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Subscriptions

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Does the agency subscribe to newspapers?
- b. If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what newspapers.
- c. What was the cost for 2010-11?
- d. What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?

Answer:

- a-d. These types of subscriptions are approved at the local level for business-related purposes. The specific details sought in respect of cost and types of newspapers across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 110

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Subscriptions

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Does the agency subscribe to magazines?
- b. If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what magazines.
- c. What was the cost for 2010-11?
- d. What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?

Answer:

- a-d. These types of subscriptions are approved at the local level for business-related purposes. The specific details sought in respect of cost and types of magazines across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 111

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Travel Costs

Senator Fisher asked:

For the year 2010-11, please detail all travel (itemised separately) undertaken by employees of each agency within each portfolio. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type – i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses.

Answer:

Australia Post spent a total of \$4,778,084 on travel during 2010-11 for business-related purposes.

The specific details sought in respect of the type of travel and expenses relating to accommodation, security, food, beverages, gifts, entertainment etc are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 112

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Travel Costs

Senator Fisher asked:

For the year FYTD, please detail all travel (itemised separately) undertaken by employees of each agency within each portfolio. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type – i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses

Answer:

Australia Post has spent a total of \$1,840,847 on travel for the FYTD, for business-related purposes.

The specific details sought in respect of the type of travel and expenses relating to accommodation, security, food, beverages, gifts, entertainment etc are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 113

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What sum did each portfolio agency spend on legal services for the year 2010-11 within the agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- b. What sum did each portfolio agency spend on legal services for the year 2010-11 from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- c. What sum did each portfolio agency spend on legal services for the year 2010-11 from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- d. What sum did each portfolio agency spend on legal services for the year 2010-11 from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

Answer:

- a. Around \$2,764,079 (staff related costs).
- b. Around \$199,942.
- c. Around \$5,428,862.
- d. Around \$1,181,111.

Details about individual services and costs are Commercial-in-Confidence.

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Question No: 114

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What sum did each portfolio agency spend on legal services FYTD within the agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- b. What sum did each portfolio agency spend on legal services FYTD from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- c. What sum did each portfolio agency spend on legal services FYTD from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- d. What sum did each portfolio agency spend on legal services FYTD from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs

Answer:

- a. Around \$881,773 (staff related costs).
- b. Around \$4,271
- c. Around \$1,884,623
- d. Around \$280,492

Details about individual services and costs are Commercial-in-Confidence.

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Question No: 115

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Education Expenses

Senator Fisher asked:

For the year 2010-11, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio agency. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant.

Answer:

The specific details sought in respect of education expenses across the entire corporation for 2010-11 are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 116

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Education Expenses

Senator Fisher asked:

For the FYTD, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio agency. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant.

Answer:

The specific details sought in respect of education expenses across the entire corporation for the FYTD are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 117

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Executive Coaching and Leadership Training 2010-11

Senator Fisher asked:

In relation to the purchase of executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by each portfolio agency, please provide the following information for the year 2010-11:

1. Total spending on these services
2. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
3. The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted
4. The names of all service providers engaged

For each service purchased from a provider listed under (4), please provide:

- a) The name and nature of the service purchased
- b) Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
- c) The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification
- d) The total number of hours involved for all employees
- e) The total amount spent on the service
- f) A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)

Where a service was provided at any location other than the agency's own premises, please provide:

- i. The location used
- ii. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
- iii. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part

Any costs the agency incurred to use the location

Answer:

- 1-4. The specific details sought in respect of Executive Coaching and Leadership Training across the entire corporation for 2010-11 are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 118

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Executive Coaching and Leadership Training FYTD

Senator Fisher asked:

In relation to the purchase of executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by each portfolio agency, please provide the following information FYTD:

1. Total spending on these services
2. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
3. The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted
4. The names of all service providers engaged

For each service purchased from a provider listed under (4), please provide:

- a) The name and nature of the service purchased
- b) Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
- c) The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification
- d) The total number of hours involved for all employees
- e) The total amount spent on the service
- f) A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)

Where a service was provided at any location other than the agency's own premises, please provide:

- i. The location used
- ii. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
- iii. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part

Any costs the agency incurred to use the location

Answer:

- 1-4. The specific details sought in respect of Executive Coaching and Leadership Training across the entire corporation for the FYTD are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 119

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Paid Parental Leave

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Please list how many staff in each portfolio agency are eligible to receive payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme?
- b. For the year 2010-11 list which portfolio agencies are providing its employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme? Please list how many staff are in receipt of these payments.

Answer:

- a-b. Australia Post put the mechanisms in place to begin providing employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme from 1 July 2011. Currently, 26 employees are in receipt of these payments.

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Question No: 120

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Paid Parental Leave

Senator Fisher asked:

For the FYTD list which portfolio agencies are providing its employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme? Please list how many staff are in receipt of these payments

Answer:

Australia Post put the mechanisms in place to begin providing employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme from 1 July 2011. Currently, 26 employees are in receipt of these payments.

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Question No: 121

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Corporate Cars

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many cars are owned by each agency in your portfolio?
- b. Where is/are the car/s located?
- c. What is/are the car/s used for?
- d. What was the cost of each car for 2010-11?
- e. How far did each car travel in 2010-11?

Answer:

a&c. Australia Post owns 435 cars, which are used for a variety of business-related purposes.

b,d&e. The specific details sought with respect to where the cars are located, cost of each car for 2010-11 and distances travelled are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 122

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Taxi Costs

Senator Fisher asked:

How much did each agency spend on taxis in 2010-11? Provide a breakdown of each business group in each agency.

Answer:

Australia Post spent a total of \$1,519,990 on taxis in 2010-11.

The specific details sought in respect of a breakdown are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 123

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Credit Cards

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many staff in each agency have a corporate credit card? What is their classification?
- b. What action is taken if the corporate credit card is misused?
- c. How is corporate credit card use monitored?
- d. What happens if misuse of a corporate credit card is discovered?
- e. Have any instances of corporate credit card misuse have been discovered? List staff classification and what the misuse was, and the action taken.
- f. What action is taken to prevent corporate credit card misuse?

Answer:

- a. 2,582 - Executive/Managers (1393) and staff (1189).
- b,d&f. Australia Post's well-publicised "Our Ethics" policy details the standards of behaviour expected of everyone who works for or represents the corporation and the disciplinary measures that will be taken in the event of a breach of the standards. This includes referral of suspected or alleged criminal behaviour to its Corporate Security Group (CSG). Where evidence supports the allegation, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authorities or the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.
- c. Use is monitored through authorisation of statements, monthly reporting and periodical audits.
- e. No cases of alleged or proven criminal behaviour involving corporate credit cards have been reported to Australia Post's CSG since 1 July 2010.

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Question No: 124

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Carbon Price Legislation

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How was your agency consulted in the development of the carbon price package?
- b. Is the carbon price package consistent with all of the policies in your agency?

Answer:

- a. Australia Post was not consulted in the development of the carbon price package.
- b. The carbon price package is consistent with Australia Post's Carbon reduction strategy policy.

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Question No: 125

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Communications

Senator Fisher asked:

How many communications people are there in each of the agencies? List their classification, position description, services they provide to Ministers and/or Parliamentary Secretaries and any guidelines they must adhere to.

Answer:

Australia Post's communications people do not provide any services to Ministers and/or Parliamentary Secretaries.

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Question No: 126

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Postal Concessions for the Blind

Senator Fifield asked:

What was the expenditure by Australia Post on postal concessions for the blind in 2010-11?

Answer:

By way of background, the Postal Concessions for the Blind Program is administered and paid for by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

The program enables blind and vision impaired people to send eligible vision-related items (e.g. Braille, audio recordings) at a concession rate, which is “free of charge” for items using the domestic mail, international surface mail up to 7kg and international Air Mail up to 250g. A heavily discounted rate applies to international Air Mail over 250g and up to 7kg.

There is no expenditure by Australia Post on postal concessions for the blind. As explained above, the program is administered and paid for by FaHCSIA.

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Question No: 127

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Postal Concessions for the Blind

Senator Fifield asked:

What is the expected expenditure by Australia Post on postal concession for the blind over the forward estimates?

Answer:

See reply to Question on Notice 126.

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Question No: 128

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Postal Concessions for the Blind

Senator Fifield asked:

How much money did Australia Post receive from the Government for these concessions in 2010-11?

Answer:

FaHCSIA reimbursed Australia Post \$890,281.83 in 2010-11.

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Question No: 129

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Postal Concessions for the Blind

Senator Fifield asked:

How many items were sent under this program in 2010-11?

Answer:

535,676 eligible items were sent under this program in 2010-11.

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Question No: 130

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Postal Concessions for the Blind

Senator Fifield asked:

How many items were sent in 2010-11 under the following eligibility criteria:

- a. Correspondence, documents or literature wholly written in embossed characters as used by the blind, for example Braille or Moon.
- b. Aids for the teaching of Braille.
- c. Plates for embossing literature for the blind.
- d. Special paper intended solely for the blind, on condition that any communication on the paper is wholly in Braille or Moon.
- e. Any form of speech recording for the use by the blind.

Answer:

- a-e. Australia Post does not record this information. FaHCSIA is best placed to answer to this question.

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Question No: 131

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Postal Concessions for the Blind

Senator Fifield asked:

How many items were sent in 2010-11 under the following eligibility criteria:

- a. the sender and/or the recipient must be a blind person
- b. an organisation recognised by Australia Post as one that serves the needs of blind people.

Answer:

a&b. Australia Post does not record this information. FaHCSIA is best placed to answer to this question.

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Question No: 132

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Postal Concessions for the Blind

Senator Fifield asked:

How many reports of fraud or misuse of this program were there in 2010-11?

Answer:

Australia Post is not aware of any reports of fraud or misuse of the program in 2010-11.