

**Senate Standing Committee on the
Environment, Communications and the Arts**
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy portfolio
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2008-2009 — October 2008

Question: 24

Topic: Workforce Statistics

Senator Birmingham asked: Senator Conroy

How many permanent staff recruited since the budget estimates?
What level are these staff?

Answer:

The Department has recruited 73 permanent staff since the Budget Estimates in May 2008.

The table below provides the number of permanent staff recruited by classification level.

Classification	Number of ongoing staff recruited since budget estimates
APS3	2
APS4	6
APS5	6
APS6	21
Legal Officer 1*	1
Legal Officer 2 **	1
Public Affairs Manager (PAM)**	1
Senior Public Affairs Officer (SPA) **	1
EL1	20
EL2	12
SESB1	1
SESB2	1
TOTAL	73

* Equivalent to APS6

** Equivalent to EL2

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Question: 25

Topic: Workforce Statistics

Senator Birmingham asked: Senator Conroy

How many temporary positions exist or have been created since Budget Estimates?

Answer:

At 20 October 2008, the Department had 23 temporary positions in existence. Of these, five were created since Budget Estimates in May 2008.

Note: The number of temporary positions in existence includes all temporary positions that are currently filled and does not include unoccupied, vacant temporary positions in the Department's staffing establishment.

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Question: 26

Topic: Workforce Statistics

Senator Birmingham asked: Senator Conroy

Since Budget Estimates, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

Answer:

Since Budget Estimates in May 2008 and 20 October 2008, the Department has employed 41 staff on contract and the average length of their employment period is 3.5 months.

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Question: 28

Topic: Media monitoring costs

Senator Birmingham asked: Senator Conroy

How much has been spent on media monitoring to date this year?

Answer:

The contract with Media Monitors has cost \$38,249.92 from 1 July to 20 October 2008.

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Question: 29

Topic: Electorate Offices

Senator Birmingham asked: Senator Conroy

For each Minister/Parliamentary Secretary in the portfolio,

how many staff based in the electorate office;

MOPS classification of each staff member based in electorate office;

duty statement of each staff member in electorate office

in relation to personal staff based in the electorate office, please list supporting Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy for each

Answer:

This information is not held by this Department. Electorate office staff are covered by the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services area of the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

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Question: 30

Topic: Communications Programs

Senator Birmingham asked: Senator Conroy

What communications programs has the Department undertaken, or are planning to undertake?

For each program, what is the total spend?

Answer:

From 1 July 2008 to 20 October 2008 the Department has conducted activities to communicate:

- a. Digital Switchover — \$336,234
- b. National E-Security Awareness Week 07-08—\$4,618.53. This amount was carried over from last financial year and paid in this financial year.

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Question: 31

Topic: Departmental hospitality

Senator Birmingham asked: Senator Conroy

What is the Department's hospitality spend YTD?

Please detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.

Answer:

\$4,625.00.

Date	Location	Purpose	Cost
27/5/08	Canberra	Meeting with Panel of Experts and senior officials from the NBN Taskforce regarding the NBN Project	\$808.50
29/7/08	Melbourne	Meeting with Panel of Experts and senior officials from the NBN Taskforce regarding the NBN Project	\$3816.50

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Question: 32

Topic: Minister's hospitality

Senator Birmingham asked: Senator Conroy

For each Minister/Parliamentary Secretary's office please detail total hospitality spend YTD.

Please detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.

Answer:

\$216.00.

Date	Location	Purpose	Cost
15/10/08	Canberra	Meal with Chair of Regional Telecommunications Independent Review	\$216.00

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Question: 33

Topic: Discretionary grants

Senator Birmingham asked:

Has the Department complied with interim requirements relating to the publication of discretionary grants?

Answer: Yes

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Question: 34 - 36

Topic: Ministerial Overseas Travel

Senator Birmingham asked:

Has the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary travelled overseas on official business since Budget Estimates? If so, where was the travel and what was the duration? What was the total cost of:

- a) travel
- b) accommodation
- c) any other expenses

How many Ministerial staff or family accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary? For these staff, what was the cost of:

- a) travel
- b) accommodation
- c) any other expenses

How many officers from the Department accompanied the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary? In relation to these Department officers, what was the total cost of:

- a) travel
- b) accommodation
- c) any other expenses

Answer:

As at 20 October 2008, the Minister has made two overseas visits since Budget Estimates. The details of these trips and accompanying DBCDE officers are set out in the tables below.

The Department of Finance and Deregulation (DoFD), is responsible for meeting the cost of Minister's official travel, including the travel costs for any accompanying ministerial staff member. DoFD has provided the following acquitted costs in relation to the Minister and Advisor for the visits below. The Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has provided the details relating to Departmental Officers that accompanied the Minister.

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Republic of Korea and Singapore

Delegate	Purpose	Duration	Airfare	Accommodation	Travel Allowance/ Other
Minister	To attend the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Ministerial Meeting on the Future of the Internet Economy and the Korea-Australia-New Zealand (KANZ) Broadband Summit in Korea. To meet with the Singapore's Minister for Information, Communication and the Arts to discuss Singapore's broadband tender process.	15 - 21 June 2008	\$8,740.81	\$2,698.72	\$649.55
Advisor			\$8,740.81	\$1,978.87	\$609.59
DBCDE Secretary (Statutory Office Holder)			\$9,506.62	\$1,965.00	\$1,455.00
DBCDE First Assistant Secretary (SES2)			\$5,093.92	\$1,555.00	\$1,430.00
DBCDE A/g Assistant Secretary (SES1)			\$4,795.98	\$1,552.40	\$4,601.52 <i>Includes working lunch paid for by DBCDE</i>
DBCDE Officer (EL1)		\$4,795.98	\$1,555.00	\$1,155.00	
DBCDE Officer (EL2)		15-19 June <i>Departed Seoul for Beijing</i>	\$7,080.50 <i>includes flight Seoul to Beijing</i>	\$2,035.00	\$1,247.50

The OECD ministerial meeting took place on 17 and 18 June 2008. The Minister arrived in Seoul on 15 June and participated with several bilateral meetings prior to the OECD Opening. Minister, Secretary and Adviser departed Seoul for Singapore on 19 June 2008. The other DBCDE officers remained in Korea to attend the KANZ summit.

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The United States of America and the United Kingdom

DOFD have advised that this Ministerial Visit has not yet been fully reconciled. Information from DOFD below is current as at 5 November 2008.

Delegate	Purpose	Duration	Airfare	Accommodation	Travel Allowance/Other
Minister	To consult with individuals and organisations in both countries regarding their strategies for digital television transition, particularly on assistance schemes for vulnerable people and on spectrum management post switchover	27 July - 8 August 2008	\$20,841.05 <i>The cost for airfares is unable to be disaggregated and is for the entire trip</i>	\$12,517.98 (USA) \$8,291.69 (UK) <i>DOFD advised unable to disaggregate between costs attributed to accommodation and or other for Minister/Adviser</i>	\$693.00
Adviser		28 July - 8 August 2008 <i>Adviser departed Australia 1 day after Minister</i>	\$20,455.70 <i>The cost for airfares is unable to be disaggregated and is for the entire trip</i>		\$591.23
DBCDE Assistant Secretary USA ONLY		27 July - 3 August 2008	\$14,191.82	\$985	\$957.50
DBCDE Deputy Secretary UK ONLY		2 - 8 August 2008	\$9,839.18	\$2,207.79	\$1,335.00

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Question: 38

Topic: Departmental Liaison Officers

Senator Birmingham asked: Senator Conroy

How many Departmental Liaison Officers are currently allocated to each Minister/Parliamentary Secretary?

Can you rule out that they provide policy advice?

Answer:

2.

Yes.

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Question: 39-40

Topic: Community Cabinet Travel Costs

Senator Birmingham asked:

What was the cost of the Minister's travel and expenses for the Community Cabinet meetings held since Budget Estimates?

How many Ministerial Staff and Departmental officers travelled with the Minister for the Cabinet meetings?

What was the total cost of this travel?

Answer:

Since Budget Estimates to 20 October 2008 there were four Community Cabinet meetings: Mackay Qld; Yirrkala, NT; Hallett Cove, SA; and Newcastle, NSW.

The Minister/ministerial staff and departmental staff did not attend the Mackay meeting. The Minister was accompanied by an Adviser and the Secretary of the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy to the Yirrkala meeting.

The Minister was on leave for both the Hallett Cove and Newcastle meetings. A Ministerial Adviser attended the Hallett Cove meeting and the Secretary of the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy attended the Newcastle meeting.

Costs associated with the Minister and his staff are paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (DoFD). DoFD has provided the following costs of commercial travel and travelling allowance to Community Cabinet meetings by Senator Conroy and his personal staff, paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation, as at 7 November 2008.

Yirrkala

Minister and Adviser - Total cost: **\$6,564.43**

Hallett Cove

Adviser only - Total cost: **\$875.96**

Note 1. The above figures include airfares and Travelling Allowance (including Motor Vehicle Allowance) claims. They do not include travel by taxis (due to the difficulties of determining exact destinations using the electronic information as provided by Cabcharge) or travel on Special Purpose Aircraft (which is administered by the Department of Defence).

Note 2. The financial information provided for airfares in the table includes additional destinations for Senator Conroy. Given the nature of the flight bookings, the cost of the

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additional destinations are not able to be disaggregated from the cost of travel to attend Community Cabinet meetings.

The travel costs relating to the attendance at Community Cabinet meetings by the Secretary of the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (a statutory office holder) were:

Yirrkala

Secretary - Total cost: **\$3,913.99**

Newcastle

Secretary - Total cost: **\$1,102.63**

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Question: # 41

Topic: Reviews

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. How many Reviews are currently being undertaken in the portfolio?
2. When will each of these reviews be concluded?
3. Which Reviews have been completed since Budget Estimates?
4. When will the Government be responding to the respective reviews that have been completed?

Answer:

1. For the purpose of this question, a review is taken to be an exercise conducted and/or paid for by the department and has been undertaken, or is being undertaken, either because of a statutory requirement to do so or in response to a decision by government. As at 20 October 2008, there were six reviews being undertaken in the Department of Broadband Communications and the Digital Economy. Reviews being undertaken by agencies in the portfolio are being responded to by those agencies.

2. See table below.

Review	Expected Date of Conclusion
Universal Service Obligation (USO) review.	The previous Government initiated a review of the USO regime in a regulatory environment where there was no plan for a National Broadband Network (NBN). The outcomes from the NBN process and the future design of USO arrangements are inherently linked. The Government will take into account stakeholder submissions to the USO Review in considering future regulatory arrangements.
Review of the duration of the simulcast period (the period during which broadcasters must provide both analog and digital transmissions in simulcast).	A report on the review will be provided to the Minister in early 2009 for approval, taking into account expected legislative amendments to implement a staggered, region-by-region digital television

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	switchover timetable.
Review of access to electronic media and films for the hearing and vision impaired.	Submissions to the investigation closed on 13 June 2008. A report summarising key points in the submissions has been provided to the Minister.
Triennial Funding Review of the ABC and SBS.	Funding requirements for the two broadcasters is being considered in the context of the 2009-10 Budget. This consideration will be informed by the ideas emerging from the public consultation process that will be completed by mid-December 2008. The Department is also working with the national broadcasters to assess their formal funding proposals.
Review of National ICT Australia (NICTA).	The report from the Review will be considered in the 2009-10 budget context.

3 See table below

4. See table below

Review	Government Response to Completed Review
Regional Telecommunications Review.	The Committee's report was provided to Government on 5 September 2008, and tabled in Parliament 15 October. The Government's response to the Report is due by 5 March 2009.

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Question: 42

Topic: Tendered Contracts For Economic Research

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. How much is the Department spending on tendered contracts for economic research?
2. Is the Department planning to conduct its own additional in-house research?
3. If so, what staffing and other resources are being allocated?

Answer:

1. In the financial year to 20 October 2008 the Department of Broadband Communications and the Digital Economy had tendered two contracts for economic research:
 - Spectrum Band Analysis to the value of \$240,765; and
 - Digital Economy Benchmarking to the value of \$97,750.
2. From time to time the Department undertakes research activity related to particular micro-economic issues as a normal part of its ongoing analytical work.
3. This is not easily estimated as micro-economic analysis is an integral part of many officers' ongoing work.

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Question: 50

Topic: Climate Change costs

Senator Boswell asked: Senator Conroy

What if any steps have been taken to estimate the costs of the government's response to climate change including the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme for every department, agency and program within this portfolio?

Answer:

DEWHA advises that the Carbon Pollution Trading Scheme has not been finalised.

Consequently no steps have been taken by this Department at this stage.

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Topic: Climate Change costs identified

Senator Boswell asked: Senator Conroy

What are the costs and estimated costs identified (reported separately)?

Answer:

No costs or estimated costs have been identified.

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Question: 52

Topic: Climate Change costs in forward estimates

Senator Boswell asked: Senator Conroy

Have any costs been included in forward estimates and if so where?

Answer:

No costs have been included in forward estimates.