

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

23 – 24 February 2011

Question No: AET 155

Topic: Change Program staffing

Hansard Page: E 40 – E 41

Senator Xenophon asked:

Senator XENOPHON—Obviously, just because you make a claim it does not mean it is a valid claim, I understand that. I have a general question about the issue of staff, Mr D’Ascenzo. I know there will be some answers on notice. Is it fair to say that you have to take on more staff to cope with the change program or the new system because of a number of technical glitches or issues with the implementation of the system?

Mr D’Ascenzo—Maybe Mr Butler can answer that more specifically. The system is working very well from our perspective. In fact, we think it has been a great achievement for this country to be able to have a new system that manages flows of processes that go to the order of three to four million a month at its peak times. Most countries in the world aspire to that. We have had a number of independent reports that have indicated how well the implementation has gone, given the complexity and size.

Mr Butler—We do not have additional staff. We have additional staff during tax time, as we always do, because it is our busiest time of the year. We can take it on notice and give you comparisons over the past three years, for example, of tax time staffing full-time equivalent numbers, if that is of interest to you.

Answer:

Each year as a consequence of the seasonality of tax time, the ATO increases its workforce during the period from July to October.

- During the 2008 tax time period the ATO increased its workforce by the equivalent of 862 additional staff for tax time.
- During the 2009 tax time period the ATO increased its workforce by the equivalent of 967 additional staff for tax time.
- During the 2010 tax time period the ATO increased its workforce by the equivalent of 1,236 additional staff for tax time.
- For the 2011 tax time period the ATO plans to increase its workforce by the equivalent of some 1,039 additional staff.