

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates 2012

15 – 17 February 2012

Question: AET 641

Topic: Social Media (ABS)

Hansard Page: Written

Senator BUSHBY asked:

641. Has there been any changes to department and agency social media or protocols about staff access and useage of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since publication of the Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online?
- a. If yes, please explain and provide copies of any advice that has been issue.
 - b. If no, please explain why not.

Answer:

The ABS understands that on 13 January 2012 the APSC revised its guidance to APS employees so that they may better understand the issues to take into account when considering making public comment, including online, and to help agencies develop and promulgate policies with this effect.

In response to these new guidelines, the ABS is finalising its social media policy. New policy will be supported by guidance and training that clearly articulates individuals' responsibilities when commenting in an official or unofficial capacity. Compliance with APS Values and the Code of Conduct currently is and will be emphasised.

Protocols supporting the policy will also clarify:

- appropriate use of ICT resources in the workplace (email, personal technology, social media),
- how to officially represent the agency online, and
- how APS ethics intersect with your online life as a private citizen.

In lieu of updated policy and training, the advice with which we currently provide staff through training in online participation and writing is broadly consistent with the thrust of Circular 2012/1.

Various mechanisms ensure the ABS closely controls access to, and usage of, social media in the workplace. Furthermore, the ABS strictly follows the guidance of DSD's Information Security Manual. In general, access to social media sites is allowed with restrictions applied to certain functionality (for instance, messaging). There has been no significant changes required or made to the access control mechanisms as a consequence of the Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2012/1.