

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

26 February 2014

Question: AET 1281-1316

Topic: Freedom of Information (IGT)

Written: 5 March 2014

Senator LUDWIG asked:

1281. Can the department please outline the process it under goes to assess Freedom of Information requests?
1282. Does the department consult or inform the Minister when it receives Freedom of Information requests?
 - a. If so, when?
 - b. If so, how does this occur?
1283. Does the department consult or inform other departments or agencies when it receives Freedom of Information requests?
 - a. If so, which departments or agencies?
 - b. If so, when?
 - c. If so, how does this occur?
1284. Does the department consult or inform the Minister when or before it makes a decision on a Freedom of Information request?
 - a. If so, when?
 - b. If so, how does this occur?
1285. Does the department consult or inform other departments or agencies when or before it makes a decision on a Freedom of Information request?
 - a. If so, which departments or agencies?
 - b. If so, when?
 - c. If so, how does this occur?
1286. What resources does the department commit to its Freedom of Information team?
1287. List the staffing resources by APS level assigned solely to Freedom of Information requests.
1288. List the staffing resources by APS level assigned indirectly to Freedom of Information requests.
1289. Does the department ever second additional resources to processing Freedom of Information requests?
 - a. If so, please detail those resources by APS level.

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1290. How many officers are currently designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the department?
- a. How does this differ to the number of officers designated as at 6 September 2013?
1291. How many officers are currently designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the Minister's office?
- a. How does this differ to the number of officers designated as at 6 September 2013?
1292. Of the officers that are designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the Ministers office, how many are seconded officers from the department?
1293. What training does the department provide to designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act who work within the department?
- a. Of the officers designated as decision makers within the department, how many have received formal training?
- b. Of the officers designated as decision makers within the department, how many have received informal training?
- c. How long after each officers appointment as a designated decision maker did they receive formal training?
- d. What did the training involve?
- e. How long was the training?
- f. By whom was the training conducted?
1294. What training does the department provide to designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act who work within the Minister's office, excluding those officers on secondment from the department?
- a. Of the officers designated as decision makers, how many have received formal training?
- b. Of the officers designated as decision makers, how many have received informal training?
- c. How long after each officers appointment as a designated decision maker did they receive formal training?
- d. What did the training involve?
- e. How long was the training?
- f. By whom was the training conducted?
1295. Since 7 September 2013, how many Freedom of Information requests been shown or alerted to the Minister or their office?
- a. List those notified request.
- b. How many instances were each of this requests brought to the office or the Minister's attention?
- c. How many of these items resulted in a separate formal brief being provided to the Minister?

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- d. How many of these items resulted in a separate informal briefing (including by email) being provided to the Minister?
- e. How many requests have resulted in multiple formal briefs being provided to the Minister or their office?
- f. How many requests have resulted in multiple informal briefs (including by email) being provided to the Minister or their office?
1296. Does the department provide FOI PDFs for download on their website?
1297. If not, what is the cost associated with staffing to require monitor email and collate and forward requested FOI documents?
1298. How does the department test it is complying with accessibility standards for its websites?
1299. Does the department comply with accessibility standards for all its websites?
1300. What would be the effect on the accessibility rating of the department's website if FOI PDFs were provided on the department websites?
1301. What accessibility testing of the website was done and what were the points of failure prior to this change in access for FOI documents?
1302. Have the website accessibility standards been solely or partly responsible for not putting FOI PDF documents on the department websites?
1303. How does the department facilitate anonymous access to the FOI disclosure files?
1304. How many times were the last 20 FOI requests PDFs which were made available on the website downloaded? How often have the FOI requests only available by email request been sent?
1305. How long does it take to requests for disclosed FOI files to be processed?. What was the average turnaround from request to sending of files in the last 3 months?
1306. What was the content of communications with other departments about the website accessibility standards and FOI PDFs?
1307. Where did advice concerning the website accessibility certification and provision of PDFs come from and what was the content of that advice?
1308. Does the department consider that not providing direct download of PDFs is more accessible for people with disabilities and the general public than providing the links?
1309. What efforts have been made to make FOI PDFs accessible to members of the public who have disabilities?
1310. Has advice from the information commissioner been sought regarding providing FOI requests available by email request only?
1311. Has any disability advice group or consultant been contacted regarding making the FOI requests accessible to people with disabilities?

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1312. Is this compatible with the information commissioners guidelines- specifically that “published information should be accessible — in particular, it should comply with an agency’s obligation to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Version 2)”.
1313. How does email PDF provision meet the information commissioner’s requirement that “13.124 Information that forms part of the IPS must be published ‘to members of the public generally’”?
1314. Is not providing the FOI PDFs on the website a means of avoiding not conforming to the WCAG 2.0 or other guidelines?
1315. Does the department have a separate email address or inbox for receiving and responding to FOI requests?
- If so, list each email account
 - List the officers who can assess and reply from those separate accounts, broken down by staffing classification level.
1316. Do FOI officers ever receive or respond to applicants from their individual email account as opposed to from a central account?
- If so, how does the officer distinguish between communication related to their task as a decision maker and their primary work task?
 - How do FOI decision makers that receive emails related to FOI decisions in their normal work capacity distinguish these emails from FOI decision emails?

Answer:

1281. The Inspector-General of Taxation agency (IGT) process is to address all Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 1982 having regard to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner Guidelines.
1282. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- Not applicable.
 - Not applicable.
1283. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- Not applicable.
 - Not applicable.
 - Not applicable.
1284. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- Not applicable.
 - Not applicable.
1285. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- Not applicable.

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- b. Not applicable.
- c. Not applicable.
- 1286. There is no dedicated FOI Unit within the IGT. The Operations & Risk Manager is responsible for coordinating and processing FOI requests as part of normal duties.
- 1287. No staff are assigned solely to processing FOI requests.
- 1288. One Executive Level 1 officer is responsible for coordinating and processing FOI requests as part of normal duties (as referred to in AET 1286).
- 1289. No.
 - a. Not applicable.
- 1290. Principal officer.
 - a. Not applicable as no change.
- 1291. As at 5 March 2014, there was one designated decision maker within the Minister's office.
 - a. Not applicable as no change.
- 1292. None.
- 1293. The Treasury as Portfolio head agency and service level provider has advised that while there is no formal training provided to decision makers, assistance and guidance is made available. The Treasury makes available to the IGT internal seminars and other supporting elements. PM&C guidance notes, the FOI Act and OAIC guidelines are also made available to the IGT via the Treasury intranet. The IGT has also received a briefing from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) regarding FOI.
 - a. Refer to AET 1293.
 - b. Refer to AET 1293.
 - c. Refer to AET 1293.
 - d. Refer to AET 1293.
 - e. Refer to AET 1293.
 - f. Refer to AET 1293.
- 1294. The Treasury as Portfolio head agency and service level provider has advised that it does not provide any formal training to decision makers in the Minister's office. However, the Treasury advises that it provides briefings to the Minister's office on the operation of the FOI Act and the assistance that can be provided by departments when requests are received by a Minister.
 - a. Refer to AET 1294.
 - b. Refer to AET 1294.
 - c. Refer to AET 1294.
 - d. Refer to AET 1294.

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- e. Refer to AET 1294.
- f. Refer to AET 1294.
- 1295. Not applicable as no valid requests received during the period.
 - a. Not applicable.
 - b. Not applicable.
 - c. Not applicable.
 - d. Not applicable.
 - e. Not applicable.
 - f. Not applicable.
- 1296. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- 1297. Not applicable.
- 1298. The Treasury as IGT's information technology service level provider (including website maintenance) has advised that it uses a combination of manual accessibility testing by trained staff, the use of browser based tools such as Vision Australia's Accessibility Toolbar and engagement of external consultants to test websites.
- 1299. The Treasury as IGT's information technology service level provider (including website maintenance) has advised that it does not comply but is progressively working towards accessibility compliance for all of its websites.
- 1300. Not applicable.
- 1301. Refer to answer to question 1298 regarding testing. The Treasury as IGT's information technology service level provider (including website maintenance) has advised that there has been no change in approach to the release of FOI documents.
- 1302. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- 1303. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- 1304. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- 1305. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received. Not applicable.
- 1306. The Treasury as IGT's information technology service level provider (including website maintenance) has advised that there has been no communication with other departments and that it refers to the Australian Government's Web Guide (webguide.gov.au) for advice on website accessibility standards.
- 1307. Refer to AET 1306.
- 1308. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- 1309. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received..
- 1310. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- 1311. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.

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1312. Not applicable, refer to AET 1306.
1313. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received..
1314. Not applicable at this time as no valid request has been received.
- 1315.
- a. foi@igt.gov.au
 - b. Agency head, Senior Executive (SES) Band 2 officer, Senior Executive Band 1 officer, Executive Level 1 officers, Australian Public Service APS6 officer.
1316. Not applicable as no valid request has been received.
- a. Not applicable.
 - b. Not applicable as no valid request has been received.