

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TREASURY

Australian Taxation Office

(Budget Estimates 2 June 2005)

Outcome 2

Topic: Translators/interpreters

Written Question on Notice: Supp LG12

Senator Ludwig asked:

A follow-up to a question Senator Ludwig asked in December ...

Regarding the employees that your department or agency has identified as having:

- a) fluency
- b) accredited translator
- c) accredited interpreter

Of these employees, please indicate what the department is doing in order to make full use of its employees skills in this regard, and please provide a breakdown of this between employees whose accreditation was paid for by the department and those whose were not?

Answer:

- a) All new employees are asked to identify any languages (other than English) in which they are fluent, although it is not mandatory to provide such information. The information provided is not verified and is thus anecdotal. The Tax Office does not have accurate, comprehensive data on the language proficiency of all its employees.
- b) The Tax Office does not use its employees for translation services, but promotes and uses the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), which is administered by the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.
- c) To be eligible the employee must meet the minimum standard of language, which is a pass, in the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) Language Aide Test. This test is paid for by the employee.

The Tax Office makes full use of its employees who are skilled and accredited in interpreting by:

- engaging employees to assist in internal interpreting services with staff from a non-English speaking background; and
- utilising employees in external communication such as ethnic radio and programs and community festivals assisting ethnic and non-English speaking taxpayers.

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TREASURY

Australian Taxation Office

(Budget Estimates 2 June 2005)

The Tax Office provides an allowance for accredited interpreters. Currently there are 144 approved accredited interpreters, who are collectively fluent in approximately 23 languages. All 144 employees are accredited at the interpreter level, either as a language aide or as a para-professional.