

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Budget Estimates

1 June 2010

**Question: BET 150**

**Topic: Staffing – Efficiency Dividend/ Budget Cuts (ATO)**

**Hansard Page: Written**

**Senator Barnett asked:**

1. Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts?
  - a) Since the efficiency dividend was introduced?
  - b) Since additional estimates (8 February 2010)?
2. If so, where and at what level?
3. Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details ie. reduction target, how this will be achieved, services/programs to be cut etc.
4. If your Department/agency has been identified in the budget as delivering further efficiencies (savings), how will these be delivered? (for example, if the budget papers say ‘improvement to strategic work practices’ or similar, what are these and how will they be delivered?)
5. What changes are underway or planned for graduate recruitment, cadetships or similar programs? If reductions or increases are envisaged please explain including reasons, target numbers etc.

**Answer:**

1.
  - a) The ATO has not specifically reduced staff as a result of the efficiency dividend. The ATO has however shifted its workforce to meet new priorities as necessary, relied on natural attrition, tightly controlled recruitment for key positions and made use of the flexibility of the temporary workforce including, in some instances, early termination of non-ongoing staff contracts. In addition, the ATO has offered 254 bona fide redundancies since late November 2007.
  - b) No. Since Additional Estimates in February 2010, the ATO adjusted its non-ongoing workforce to address workloads and prepare for Tax Time 2010 processing.
2. See response to Question 1.
3. No.
4. The ATO was not identified in the Budget to deliver on further efficiencies.
5. The ATO is increasing the number of graduates recruited to its workforce through additional new policy funding received for compliance work in the May

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2010 budget. Graduate recruitment is a key strategy to invigorate and renew our workforce through 'growing our own', recognising our ageing demographic. The ATO is also piloting a new strategy called Destination ATO. This strategy provides an avenue for candidates who are not successful for the Graduate Program to be considered for another entry level position within the ATO. This strategy is designed to maximise the use of this candidate pool.

A new APS 1 entry level training program was piloted in March with 15 new staff. A subsequent recruitment will be run later in the year, where a similar intake is expected.

The ATO plans to expand the following programs in 2010:

- a) Indigenous School to Work program
- b) Indigenous Cadet and Traineeship program
- c) School to Work program for students with disabilities , and
- d) Stepping Into program for university students with disabilities.