

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Estimates, November 2004

Question: Supp 10

Topic: AASB - Procurement

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Murray asked:

1. When did the Department last update its procurement policy documentation?
2. What mechanisms does the Department have in place to ensure its procurement guidelines reflect current policy in relation to government contracting?
3. Do the Department's current procurement guidelines refer to all of the following accountability mechanisms:
 - The Senate order for departmental and agency contracts;
 - The Department of Finance and Administration's February 2003 *Guidance on Confidentiality of Contractors' Commercial Information*; and
 - The Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (CPGs) ?
4. Do the Department's tender documentation and contract templates include the following elements:
 - a statement outlining the various Commonwealth accountability requirements;
 - a consistent definition of confidential information across all templates;
 - a provision for the inclusion of specific reasons justifying why a tenderer may wish to protect certain information in the contract if it awarded;
 - a section that outlines the obligations of confidentiality after the contract has been awarded;
 - a more detailed outline, with the general non-disclosure clauses, of the exceptions to confidentiality obligations for Commonwealth contracts; and
 - the model contract clauses, given in DOFA's February 2003 *Guidance on Confidentiality of Contractor's Commercial Information* ?
5. At page 51 of ANAO Audit Report No.10 2004-2005, *The Senate Order for Departmental and Agency Contracts (Calendar Year 2003 Compliance)*, the ANAO has concluded that all FMA agencies would benefit from implementation of contract training courses, or a review of current courses, to ensure that the Senate order

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requirements are adequately covered and that procurement staff receive relevant DOFA guidance.

What training does the Department currently have in place for procurement staff?

6. Does this training cover the requirements of the Senate order for departmental and agency contracts and refer to DOFA's February 2003 *Guidance on Confidentiality of Contractor's Commercial Information*?

Answer:

AASB met with representatives of the Procurement Agency Advice Branch (Nicholas Hunt and Andrea Novak) on 17 November 2004 to discuss the requirements of the new Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (CPG's).

After reviewing the operations of the AASB and the levels of expenditure, which being a very small agency are very low, it was agreed that the AASB was well below the thresholds in the CPG's and that there was little likelihood the AASB would need to apply them. The AASB agreed to consider the CPG's if any procurement in the future was above the thresholds.

The AASB does not have a procurement policy document because procurement is not significant.

The AASB does not issue tenders so the questions in relation to the contract templates are not applicable.

The AASB does not train staff in procurement as it is not appropriate.