

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TREASURY

Australian Taxation Office

(Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2004)

Outcome 2, Output 2.2.1

Topic: Fluency in languages other than English

Supplementary question on notice: Supp 17

Senator **Ludwig** asked:

- a) For each language other than English that the Department (Tax Office) has identified employees with fluency, can the Department provide how employees were fluent? For each language other than English, how many were identified as being fluent?

Answer

All new employees are asked to identify any languages (other than English) in which they are fluent, 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. Employees used for interpreter services must be accredited interpreters. The Tax Office currently has 138 employees who are accredited interpreters and who are collectively fluent in 23 languages

- b) Of these employees, what efforts has the department made to identify the language proficiency of these employees? For each language other than English, how many were identified as having proficiency?

Answer: Refer (a)

- c) Of these employees, how many has the Department identified as possessing accredited language skills to either translator or interpreter standard? For each language other than English, how many were identified as having accreditation at the a) translator and b) interpreter level?

Answer:

All the 138 employees are accredited at the interpreter level, either as a language aide or as a para-professional. The Tax Office does not use its employees for translation services.

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- d) Of these employees, how many has the Department funded in whole or in part accreditation of language skills to either a) translator and b) interpreter level?

Answer

ATO employees, accredited and approved to provide interpreter services under the current agency agreements, receive allowances for interpretation services as follows: \$761 per annum at the language aide interpreter level and \$1517 per annum at the para-professional interpreter level.