

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Australian Taxation Office
Supplementary Budget Estimates
22 October 2009

Topic: Average FTE in call centres and numbers of calls received

Hansard Page: E37

Question: sbt 40

Senator BUSHBY—You are looking to improved efficiency. Are there any plans to change staffing levels?

Ms Vivian—We are always reviewing that. That is a constant thing. We are always looking to see what the appropriate staff level is. It is a whole range of things. We are always reviewing that.

Mr D'Ascenzo—We have looked for productivity improvements in all aspects of our work, including our call centre work. I think you would see some reduction over the last couple of years in terms of our call centre basic FTEs. Although as Ms Vivian said it goes up and down because we have ongoing staff to meet this.

Senator BUSHBY—For the last five years could you give me your average FTE over each of those financial years?

Mr D'Ascenzo—If it has not decreased or increased it should be relative to the number of calls we have as well, because that varies as well.

Senator BUSHBY—That is fine. If that is put relative to the number of calls it would be very useful.

Answer:

On 1 July 2006, most telephony functions in the Tax Office were brought together in a single business line.

Around 90 per cent of all inbound calls to the Tax Office are now received in this business line. Some high volume, low complexity calls are dealt with by an external overflow call centre and the balance are handled in other parts of the Tax Office.

More details are in the table below. Figures are only readily available for the years since the business line was formed.

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Year	Total calls answered in the ATO *	Calls answered in the telephony business line	FTE in the telephony business line**	Calls answered by the external overflow call centre
2006-07	9,809,719	8,447,254	1,714	120,389
2007-08	9,248,058	7,383,593	1,761	761,124
2008-09	11,466,703	8,717,263	1,708	1,610,961
*2009-10	4,192,056	2,882,486	1,524	936,847

* 2009-10 year represents call data as at the end of October 2009 only. The internal staff number quoted is a full-year projection of the annualised staffing level.

** FTE numbers include all staff employed in the telephony business line – both frontline operatives and support staff.