

**Estimates 2005-06 — Additional Estimates, February 2006****Questions on Notice Index—Finance and Administration portfolio**

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F1	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 4, 40 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—They are not unfamiliar to me. I note that the officers have come to the table. I was just querying the significant variations in expenses in the final outcomes. The explanation primarily being advanced across all categories in both years related to superannuation issues. In 2003-04 the officer mentioned in respect of the 9.69 per cent variation the implementation of superannuation choice. I am interested to know how that policy—and that is not an actuarial issue—led to such a significant variation. Ms Doran—I am afraid that I am probably not going to be able to give you the detail of answer right at the moment. I am happy to take it off line and find more detail for you. My understanding, though, is that as a result of the latest long-term cost report, which our actuaries completed based on data at 1 July 2005, there was a more accurate estimate of the impact of the closure of the PSS defined benefit scheme and the start of the accumulation plan. I believe that these variations reflect the refinement in those estimates. So it is not the first time that choice has been reflected in our estimates but rather a refinement on the basis of the actuaries' best advice in the latest long-term cost report.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Dr Watt—While we are back on the tangential subject of superannuation, you asked about our accuracy estimates this morning and the reason for the variations involved. We have a bit more work to do on that and we probably will not get it back today. We would probably need to take it on notice rather than try and respond to you, to give you a full and proper answer.</p>	Received 9/05/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F2	DOFA	Murray	F&PA 11-12 14/02/06	<p>Senator MURRAY—I am not sure that legally that is true. In legislation, you would not need to define trustee because it is known through jurisprudence and through legal precedence what trustee means. I do not know whether the same applies to guardians. It would need to be defined in the bill, I would have thought. Perhaps, when you take that on notice, you should indicate to us what the legal status of guardian will be.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Yes—whether in fact any common law exists in regard to guardians that is relevant to the Australian jurisdiction—</p> <p>Senator BRANDIS—The only common law about guardians is in relation to children and insane people.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—That is interesting—and I am not sure that it is good!</p> <p>Senator BRANDIS—It is the only occasion I can think of that the term, as a term of art, appears in the law.</p> <p>Senator Santoro—I can certainly confirm that in New Zealand they are also called guardians, but I do not know what that says about New Zealand.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Maybe you can put that point to Mr Murray when he appears before the committee.</p> <p>Senator BRANDIS—I make the point because I suspect that the choice of the language is rhetorical and hortative and not based on any legal analogue.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—We will see! In respect to trustees in Australia, there is a common-law English background which was used in Australia and then codified in SIS for the governance—some would argue guardianship—of superannuation funds. Just coming back to you, Mr Mowbray-d’Arbela—</p> <p>Dr Watt—Could I just make a point about Senator Murray’s question? We are happy to take your question on notice, Senator Murray. We thought we might be able to get an early answer to Senator Sherry’s question rather than taking it formally on notice and coming back, but for yours we will obviously have to take it on notice.</p>	Received 30/3/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F3	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 13-16 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—What is the indicative figure that has been indicated for that guardians and the chair of the guardians?</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator Santoro—Senator Sherry, we can take that on notice and try to get back to you with as much information as we can.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Dr Watt—We are happy to take this on notice but there is one point that should be made. As board members have not yet been selected, it would be rather unusual in the case of a new board for them to find out what their indicative salary might be through this purpose.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Yes, going forward. We know we have an estimate of the operation of the Future Fund. That is correct. What is the estimate for the salaries of the board members? It can only be an estimate. I accept that. But what is the estimate in there?</p> <p>Dr Watt—I think we are happy to undertake to see if we can get you an answer but, because it is an indicative estimate, we would have to undertake to see if we can get you an answer.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator Santoro—We can keep going on, but you have an undertaking that the secretary and the officers are happy to take the questions on notice and provide you with detail. I am happy to sit here and the officers can keep discussing whether or not they can provide them to you straightaway, but the advice I have just received is that they are in a conglomerate form. They are happy to take it on notice and provide you with detail.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Dr Watt—We would have to go away and calculate a figure. We do not have a figure here with us for how much the board would cost. We can undertake to see if we can do that for you.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Dr Watt—We are happy to undertake to go away and see if we can get a calculation for you.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—It has been taken on notice.</p> <p>Dr Watt—We have undertaken to look at the aggregate figure.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Yes. Are you saying that you may provide it?</p> <p>Dr Watt—We will see what we can do.</p>	Received 31/3/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F4	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 20 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—Has consideration been given to the option if more than 36 per cent of the shares are transferred to the Future Fund—current ownership is 51—of what I think is called a section 9 declaration in respect of technical ownership of Telstra. Is it possible for that still to be exercised by the Commonwealth through the Future Fund?</p> <p>Mr Heazlett—This is not a matter that has been subject to explicit consideration at the moment. Naturally it will be one of the issues that are considered in the lead-up to any sale or transfer.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—If 36 per cent or more of the shares of Telstra are in the Future Fund, who is the owner under that provision?</p> <p>Mr Heazlett—I am not familiar with the specific provision of the act that you are referring to.</p> <p>Dr Watt—Perhaps we can see if we can get you an answer for that too.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Just to expand it a little more, my understanding is that if there are more than 36 per cent of the shares owned by an entity, in this case the Future Fund, the Commonwealth remains technically the owner. That is my advice.</p> <p>Mr Lewis—What section specifically is that?</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Section 9, declaration.</p> <p>Dr Watt—Section 9 of?</p> <p>Mr Lewis—The Telstra act?</p> <p>Mr Heazlett—It is certainly not the Telstra act. Is it the Corporations Act?</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—I think it is the Corporations Act. I would have to clarify that.</p> <p>Dr Watt—We will check that.</p> <p>Mr Lewis—Senator, in ordinary circumstances we would undertake to come back to you through the course of today's hearings but it may be something we need to consult our lawyers about because it is not particularly familiar to me, I am afraid.</p>	<p>Senator Sherry provided advice that "Section 9" is from the Telstra Corporations Act 1991.</p> <p>Received 9/05/06</p>

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F5	DOFA	Murray	F&PA 25 14/02/06	<p>Dr Watt—Perhaps we could come back to your ASIC point, because again it is an interesting issue. We have no equivalent of ASIC in the public sector, you are quite right. But then the public sector is not the equivalent of the private sector. The fact that we can have this discussion here suggests that there are other mechanisms by which ASIC type roles can be brought into play. I am sure that, through this estimates process as well as past estimates processes, there will be a few thick ears handed out, which ASIC does not have the ability to do.</p> <p>Senator MURRAY—I want to formally request you consider this issue further and come back to the committee with a view as to whether you think the process of enforcement—but I do not have a problem with your determinations and directives; that is not an issue for me—and administrative consequence could be better addressed than it is at present.</p> <p>Dr Watt—I am a little bit constrained in what I can agree to without the Minister for Finance and Administration here.</p> <p>Senator MURRAY—I would expect you to go to him.</p> <p>Dr Watt—But I will certainly make the point to him—</p> <p>Senator MURRAY—But it is a request.</p> <p>Dr Watt—that you have raised.</p>	Received 30/3/06
F6	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 29 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—That sounds reasonable to me. There is just one other issue on this. What is the total payment that has been made to Mr Murray so far in his capacity as a consultant, approximately? You know how reasonable I am about this.</p> <p>Dr Watt—We will see if we can get you an estimate. At this stage I can assure you that it is not very much.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Could you also indicate the basis on which the payment is made. Is it an hourly rate or a daily rate?</p> <p>Dr Watt—Sure.</p>	Received 30/3/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F7	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 29 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—Thanks. I want to come back to the issues of the Charter of Budget Honesty Act. Perhaps we will start with the Future Fund while we still have that fresh in our minds. On the costing of the Future Fund, the answer to supplementary question on notice F49, which was received on 13 February this year, says: Consistent with the costing conventions in the guidelines, Finance requested additional information on the assumptions the government had made in relation to the proposed investment fund, the Future Fund. What was the additional information that was sought?</p> <p>Dr Watt—I would like Mr Bowen, head of our Budget Group to pick this one up.</p> <p>Mr Bowen—The fact that we had sought further information was published on the website, but the nature of the information sought was not published.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—That is why I am asking.</p> <p>Mr Bowen—At this point, not only do I not have it with me but I do not think I am in a position to answer that question.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Could you take that on notice.</p>	Received 9/05/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F8	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 31 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—Obviously my next question will have to be taken on notice. Can you identify the policies announced by, in this case, the government during the election on which work was done prior to the calling of the election? It may have been in part or it may have been in whole. Can you take that on notice?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—We will take it on notice.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—I would not expect you to have that here.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—I am not sure we ever provide that information at estimates.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—We have discussed it.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—Policies that the department was working on for the government prior to the caretaker period?</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Yes.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—I am not aware of that precedent.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—I will have to go back through the Hansard and draw it out. There have been discussions about a policy announcement made by the government during the election and an admission by a department that work had been done on that prior to the election. I am not suggesting that that is wrong or unusual; I am just seeking to identify those by list.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—What we might take on notice is the precedent for supplying such information.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—It has been supplied.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—I am not sure that it was in this context at an estimates hearing.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—It was at estimates. I will get the Hansard out and I will refer it to you.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—We will certainly have a look at the question of precedent.</p>	Received 9/05/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F9	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 32 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—Yes, I understand that that is your caveat. Do you have an approximate figure for the resources devoted during that caretaker period to the costings of government policy announcements and opposition policy announcements?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—We have not ever sought to do that.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—I am asking now. Obviously, you do not have that here. Can you take that on notice?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—Frankly, it would be fairly difficult to do. We can give an indication of our resourcing overall and the number of costings, but that does not necessarily equate to the time spent. We would not have records that go to that detail.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—So, you are saying that the officers are doing work on both sets—government and opposition—at the same time? The same officers?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—Yes, they can be.</p> <p>Dr Watt—It is much more complex than that. Not only are officers working on government and opposition questions but they are also doing incoming briefs for both a returning coalition and an incoming Labor government, and we also have a PEFO to put together. We were busy on lots of different things and I do not think there is any way of reconstructing the amount of time we spent on one as opposed to another.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Well, best endeavours. Take it on notice.</p> <p>Dr Watt—We are happy to take it on notice, but I can tell you the answer now: it is not possible.</p>	Received 30/3/06



QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F10	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 35-36 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—I want to go to one issue specifically at the moment: the utilities allowance that was announced at the last election. The original cost—\$82 million in 2004-05, \$169 million in 2005-06, \$176 million in 2006-07 and \$183 million in 2007-08—would be an obvious issue on which the long-term growth in retirees and pensioners would impact. Did you do any forward costing on that beyond the forward estimates?</p> <p>Ms Wilson—We costed the forward estimates period only. That is my understanding.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—I am a little surprised at that, given your earlier statement. It seems to me to be an obvious one where the cost would accelerate beyond the forward estimates at a greater rate.</p> <p>Mr Bowen—I think we would need to have a look at that. There are a number of demographic factors coming into play there. Some may be suggesting an increase; others may not. It depends on the cohort.</p>	Received 9/05/06
F11	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 37 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—Has Finance undertaken commission work over the past 10 years that compares the alternative benefits to the community of different spending on a range of different areas—for example, spending on education and spending on roads?</p> <p>Dr Watt—Not that we are aware of sitting here and now, but our collective memory does not go back beyond five years.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Could you take it on notice and check the last 10 years?</p> <p>Dr Watt—Yes. It is highly speculative analysis. It does not sound like us.</p>	Received 9/05/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F12	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 39 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—I want to come to an individual issue, without naming the person's name. I do not seek their identity. But I understand a promotion has occurred over the last calendar year of an individual who had been, effectively, sent home early from an overseas deployment for misconduct. Are you aware of anything of this nature?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—No.</p> <p>Dr Watt—This is an area where we have to tread very carefully, but I think what Mr Bowen is saying is that we are not aware of an individual who was sent home early from overseas deployment for misconduct, full stop.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Okay.</p> <p>Mr Bowen—We have not had anybody sent home for that reason.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Can you take it on notice to check? You may not be aware of it.</p>	Received 30/3/06
F13	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 41 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—I do not know whether that was the case in respect of the two examples you quoted, Qantas and the Commonwealth Bank.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—The question is: do they remain in the CSS-PSS. They do not.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—The issue is: did you check, when you checked that, whether the new fund effectively had equivalent rights to the old fund.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—That was not the gist of your question. Your question was whether they ceased to belong to the CSS-PSS.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—No, the gist of my question was: they cease to belong but what is the consequence of them ceasing to belong.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—I would have to go and check that, but I am happy to do so.</p>	Received 30/3/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F14	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 42 14/02/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—I would put it to you that there is nothing in law—the Shell case is, I think, the main precedent—preventing the employer from repatriating the surplus from the DB fund if it so wishes. You have not examined that issue?</p> <p>Ms Doran—No, I have not. It is not an issue for us; it is a case for the trust deed and the trust in the particular circumstance. It is not an issue that we would look at.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—The point I am getting at is that the government as a majority shareholder has obviously chosen not to touch the surplus in the existing fund. It has not done anything about that. The trustees are dealing with the matter. Once Telstra is sold, my understanding is the new employer, the new owners, will have a right, if they so wish, to determine what happens to that surplus. It is not just the trustees but the new owners who will have a right and can exercise it if they wish.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—I think the officers are saying that is not our understanding, but we are happy to check that as soon as possible.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Yes, could you check that, because I think it is an issue. Telstra may or may not choose to do something—I do not know—once it passes into majority private ownership. I do not know what the existing surplus in the fund is—I understand it is in surplus. So could you have a look at that issue.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—We will come back to you as soon as we can on that.</p>	Received 30/3/06

<b>QON No.</b>	<b>Department / agency</b>	<b>Senator</b>	<b>Hansard reference</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>F15</b>	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 44 14/02/06	Senator SHERRY—Thanks. It is not critical. I will double-check. I put quite a lot of questions on notice at the end of last year—I think it was in December—about a whole range of superannuation matters. I will double-check. If I have not done so, could you take this on notice and let me know the number of people who are no longer working in the public sector—they have gone to the private sector, although there might be some areas in the public sector, state or Commonwealth, where the PSS-PSS does not apply—and have accrued a right or an entitlement that will crystallise at some date when they retire? You can give me the raw number of people. And, if you can, give me an estimate of the total cost—the liability effectively—for that group of people. I am a reasonable person, so I ask for a reasonable date—probably a financial year or a calendar year end date for both the number and the accrued liability, which would make up part of the ongoing liabilities. Could you take that on notice?	Senator Sherry provided advice that this question was originally asked on 4/10/05, and has not been answered yet. He would like it taken on notice again here.  Received 30/3/06
<b>F16</b>	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 48 14/02/06	Senator SHERRY—Do you have a calculation for admin? There would have to be an admin cost. Mr Carrigy-Ryan—We have a dollar cost of 107 per member. Do you want that in basis points? Senator SHERRY—Could you take that on notice. Mr Carrigy-Ryan—Yes, we can.	Received 30/3/06
<b>F17</b>	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 48 14/02/06	Senator SHERRY—Can you take on notice what the effective admin cost is that is not charged to the member of the DC? Mr Carrigy-Ryan—Yes.	Received 30/3/06
<b>F18</b>	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 48 14/02/06	Senator SHERRY—What is the cost of the death and disability insurance? Mr Carrigy-Ryan—It is publicly disclosed in the product disclosure statement. I will take it on notice and get it to you.	Received 30/3/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F19	DOFA	Evans	F&PA 52 14/02/06	<p>Mr Saunders—It depends on the timing of the final payment that was made to the fund in the 2003-04 year. That would have affected the earnings. I cannot tell you when that payment was made.</p> <p>Senator CHRIS EVANS—Can you take on notice for me when that payment was made? I understand the original estimate on the target figure for the fund was \$1.4 billion. Is that right?</p> <p>Mr Saunders—That happens to be the current balance of the fund—\$1.4 billion.</p> <p>Senator CHRIS EVANS—Was that the target, though, as well?</p> <p>Mr Saunders—There was a target but, I am sorry, I cannot tell you what it was.</p> <p>Senator CHRIS EVANS—But if it was \$1.4 billion, the value of the fund is now \$1.43 billion or \$1.46 billion. That was in 2003-04.</p> <p>Mr Saunders—I think it was \$1.41 billion at the end of 2004-05, but I cannot confirm that right now.</p>	Received 30/3/06
F20	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 60 14/02/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—When we come to the cabinet policy unit, that is now seven; it used to be five.</p> <p>Mr Miles—The only figures that I have here show what has happened since the last time we tabled those figures.</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—I was not here the last time you tabled, but it is up from five. I am just trying to establish that. There is no corporate knowledge that it used to be five and it has now gone to seven? I am the corporate knowledge, am I?</p> <p>Dr Watt—We would be happy to concede that there used to be fewer in number, whether it was five or more or less is—</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—What I was about to ask is: when did it change and why did it change? So we do not know?</p> <p>Dr Watt—We are happy to take that on notice. We do not have the information here now.</p>	Received 9/05/06
F21	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 60 14/02/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Let us go to the government members secretariat. That used to be 10. On one occasion it may have been 11, but it is now 12. When did that change?</p> <p>Ms Mason—Again, we would take that on notice and check on the date of the change.</p>	Received 9/05/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F22	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 60-62 14/02/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Let us go to the absolutely staggering and extraordinary staff allocation on this list. The Leader of the National Party in the Senate—10 staff. When did this start? It used to be four or five, or three at one stage. How did it get up to 10? When did this occur?</p> <p>Ms Mason—Again, we can check the timing for you. We do not have that information with us at the moment.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Ms Mason—On 12 July 2005, the allocation increased from three to 10.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—I am just making the point, Senator Carr, that they received an increase in the number of senators they had in the house. With respect to the specifics of why they have received an increase in staff, as has been stated here several times, that is a decision for the Prime Minister to make. He would obviously have some justification behind that. Whether he is prepared to give that to the committee I do not know, but I can only take the question on notice.</p>	Received 9/05/06
F23	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 62 14/02/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—If that were the explanation, explain this: the Greens doubled their numbers, the National Party's went up by 50 per cent; the Greens' staffing went up by two and The Nationals' by seven. Looking at the breakdown is even more interesting, particularly when you see the level at which these people have been allocated. We have five assistant advisers. I ask: are these five assistant advisers Canberra based? I would hate to think that they were out in the field working for the National Party, as surreptitious organisers.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Ms Mason—We will have to take on notice the location of those assistant advisers.</p>	Received 9/05/06

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<b>F24</b>	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 62 14/02/06	Senator ROBERT RAY—Can we send them a quick cheerio while we are at it? I return to the increase, Mr Miles. I am only seeking information; I am not holding you responsible for the figures. You understand that. We had three; less than 12 months ago it went to 10. Can you tell me what the configuration was prior to the jump? When there were three, at what level were they? I would like to do a comparison with where the additions are. Mr Miles—We will be able to get that information at the same time.	Received 9/05/06
<b>F25</b>	DOFA	Ray/Faulkner	F&PA 63 14/02/06	Senator ROBERT RAY—I would now like you to take on notice what the total staff costs are for the staff of Senator Boswell. Note the subtlety of the question. I am not asking for a salary per person. I think that by having 10 there is no way you could guess the salary of an individual. I am asking for the global staff costs. If you want to take a specific day at that salary level, I would like to know what it would cost per annum to have a staff salary rise. Is that doable? Ms Mason—I believe so. We understand what you are asking for. Senator FAULKNER—Could you also take on notice the home base? Ms Mason—Yes.	Received 9/05/06
<b>F26</b>	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 64 14/02/06	Senator FAULKNER—Senator Colbeck, do we have any idea why Senator Abetz has 3.6 more ministerial staff for the same area of ministerial responsibility? We know that Senator Macdonald was not a popular figure in government, along with a range of other Queensland Liberals, but surely that is not the explanation for the fact that Senator Abetz has 3.6 more staff to do the same job. Can you help us? Senator Colbeck—As with the allocation of staff to the Leader of the Nationals, that is a decision for the Prime Minister in allocating staff to the portfolios, and he has obviously made that decision. Senator FAULKNER—Really? Where are the extra 3.6 based? Senator Colbeck—I would have to take that on notice.	Received 9/05/06
<b>F27</b>	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 65 14/02/06	Senator FAULKNER—So we do not know the reason. Senator Colbeck, is that the case? Senator Colbeck—The Prime Minister has made a decision as to staff allocations, and the decision rests with him. If you are looking for a reason, I can take a question on notice from you and he can decide whether he answers it.	Received 9/05/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F28	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 65 14/02/06	<p>Senator CARR—Have there be any changes to the administrative orders with regard to the responsibilities for the Special Minister of State?</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—I am not aware of that.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—But it is a perfectly reasonable question at this committee, given that we are dealing with an area of his responsibility.</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—There have been some changes, although very minor.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—What are they, please, Ms Mason or Mr Bowen?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—I do not believe there have been AAO changes. There may have been some reallocations within the portfolio but, as the parliamentary secretary said, I think they have been minor.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—So they are decisions made by Senator Minchin you are saying?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—Yes.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—As it is very important that we know that for questioning at this committee, can you outline them for us?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—We will get that information for you shortly.</p>	Received 30/3/06
F29	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 65-66 14/02/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—You are jumping at shadows. There is no trick here. If you let me finish, I will go on to explain. We would like to pursue these questions with the Prime Minister. Because there is always a three-month lag time, is there any obstacle to us being provided with these questions at the start of estimates so that we can then ask the Prime Minister through his representative obviously—as the Prime Minister is not a member of the Senate—why these changes were made? I am told we are committed to transparency of government, but every time you produce these here we have already just dealt with the Prime Minister's department and we cannot pursue them.</p> <p>Ms Mason—That is something that we can check. I do not know the answer, but it is something that we can check for you.</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—I put a question on notice: five days prior to the next Senate estimates, can you provide me with this thing? I can do that via a Senate formal question on notice, but I would prefer to do it informally.</p> <p>CHAIR—Take that as a question on notice.</p> <p>Ms Mason—I will take that.</p>	Received 9/05/06



QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F30	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 66 14/02/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Could you provide the committee on notice, because there is no way you could do it on the spot—and, if you like, you can express this in percentage terms—how much, averaged out, principal advisers' salaries have increased in the last five years as well as senior advisers and chiefs of staff? In fact, why don't we just go across the top of this document—</p> <p>CHAIR—Which document, Senator Ray?</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Sorry, the document entitled 'Government Personal Employees as at 1 February 2006.' How much over the last five years—say, from 2000 to the end of 2005 or, if those dates are inconvenient, pick a convenient fair date; I will leave it to you to pick a fair date which is not one immediately before a pay rise or something like that—in percentage terms have each of those groups gone up in salary on average?</p> <p>Ms Mason—Over a five-year period from roughly 2000 to 2005?</p> <p>...</p> <p>Ms Mason—I just need to clarify because, for the personal staff—for all staff, in fact—there are salary ranges. It would be very difficult for us to get a person-by-person figure. We may need to look at picking a particular point in the range.</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—That is a fair point. Why don't we take the top of the range in 2000 and the top of the range in 2005, so you do not have to go anywhere other than looking at that by category, and the top of the range for A, B and C? Would that be a lot simpler?</p> <p>Ms Mason—It is certainly much clearer and much easier for us.</p> <p>CHAIR—Is that every category across the top of the document?</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Yes, but now we have cut the task back by about 500 per cent, I suspect. It is going to be a lot easier to find these figures. And I should warn you it does not actually reflect what is happening out there other than the trend, because some people would be paid less.</p> <p>Ms Mason—Given that there were also changes to the range over time, it might be useful if we take two points—the top and bottom of each range.</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—That would be good; that would be helpful.</p>	Received 9/08/06
F31	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 69 14/02/06	<p>Senator Colbeck—The role of the GMS staff is at the direction of the Chief Government Whip. He determines their responsibilities. If you want to find out exactly what those responsibilities are you can leave me a question on notice and I will seek an answer for you.</p>	Received 9/05/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F32	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 69-70 14/02/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—Can you explain to me why on 28 July 2004 at 10.38 am a Canberra based assistant adviser working in the Government Members Secretariat signed up using their Finance email address to receive email information from the Labor member for Chisholm, Ms Burke? Can you explain that to me?</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—No, I cannot. I will take that on notice and check that with the Chief Government Whip, whose responsibility is to allocate duties to staff in the GMS.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—I am asking whether you want me to name the staff member or whether you are going to sort it out and make sure it does not happen again.</p> <p>CHAIR—The question has been taken on notice.</p>	Received 24/05/06
F33	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 72 14/02/06	Mr Staun—It was in the discussions that we had with Mr Suur in November, when this issue came up. I will check for the committee for certain what access was used during that period for the GMS. I can do that through the logs.	Received 9/05/06
F34	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 74 14/02/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—In relation to the Government Members Secretariat asset register, I received an answer to a question on notice which Dr Watt took on notice in the round in November. You probably do not have the information available now. It was my written question on notice F&amp;PA 56, 1 November 2005. Could you take on notice to update that asset register up to the current date, maybe to 1 February?</p> <p>Mr Hutson—Certainly.</p>	Received 9/05/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F35	AEC	Faulkner	F&PA 82 14/02/06	<p>Mr Campbell—I think there have been times in the past when the AEC has made comments about donations, but I think you would have to go back and look at the fine detail as to whether they were talking about the administrative issues flowing from that or whether they were talking about the so-called rights or wrongs. I think we would have to go back and look at what was said in the past. I do not know.</p> <p>Mr Dacey—My recollection as well is that when we have brought things to the attention of committees in the past it has certainly been in relation to administrative issues—particularly those issues to do with compliance—with overseas donations. I am happy to take on notice whether we have had another position, but I am sure the focus has been on the difficulties we have with administration.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—Thanks to both of you for that—that is helpful. Perhaps you can check that.</p> <p>Mr Campbell—We will do that.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—The thrust of what I am saying is that it is certainly a different category to the voluntary voting issue—there is no doubt about that. I have seen submissions in which historically the AEC has addressed the issue of overseas donations and expressed concern, but you may well be right and maybe they were about administrative issues as opposed to, if you like, a broader policy concern. But if you would not mind, and if it is not too difficult, checking that on notice, I would appreciate it.</p>	Answered F&PA 85 14/02/06
F36	AEC	Faulkner	F&PA 85 14/02/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—I did say, Ms Mitchell, and I was quite serious, that I do not want this to sound too much like a trivia quiz. But, given the evidence of Mr Campbell and that Lord Ashcroft's donation is something which has repeatedly been, as you would appreciate, in the media, I was wondering what the second-largest donation was, when it was received and who gave it.</p> <p>Mr Campbell—By an individual or an incorporated body?</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—I think the point made about Lord Ashcroft's donation is that it is the biggest individual donation. That is my understanding.</p> <p>Mr Campbell—So you want individual rather than—</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—Yes.</p> <p>Ms Mitchell—I would probably have to take that on notice.</p>	Received 9/05/06

<b>QON No.</b>	<b>Department / agency</b>	<b>Senator</b>	<b>Hansard reference</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>F37</b>	AEC	Faulkner	F&PA 88 14/02/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—If a party fails to meet the registration requirements, they are immediately deregistered and listed?</p> <p>Ms Mitchell—Yes. There are repeal rights under the act, but they are immediately—</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—It is an immediate public listing?</p> <p>Ms Mitchell—Yes, it is. The advice goes on the website. They are removed from the registered list and put on the deregistered list.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—What is the total number that have been deregistered since the 2004 election?</p> <p>Ms Mitchell—I do not have the figure with me. Off the top of my head, it is about half a dozen, but I would have to check that for you.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—The obvious question is: which ones are they? But you do not have that. Don't guess. If you do not have it, take it on notice.</p> <p>Mr Campbell—We will take it on notice.</p> <p>Ms Mitchell—I will have to take it on notice.</p>	Received 9/05/06
<b>F38</b>	AEC	Faulkner	Written	Attached	Received 9/05/06
<b>F39</b>	DOFA	Sherry	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F40</b>	DOFA	Sherry	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F41</b>	DOFA	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F42</b>	AEC	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F43</b>	CGC	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F44</b>	ComSuper	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F45</b>	CSS	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F46</b>	PSS	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F47</b>	DOFA	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F48</b>	AEC	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F49</b>	CGC	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F50</b>	ComSuper	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F51</b>	CSS	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F52</b>	PSS	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06
<b>F53</b>	AEC	Carr	Written	Attached	Received 9/05/06
<b>F54</b>	AEC	Carr	Written	Attached	Received 9/05/06
<b>F55</b>	AEC	Carr	Written	Attached	Received 9/05/06
<b>F56</b>	AEC	Carr	Written	Attached	Received 9/05/06
<b>F57</b>	DOFA	Evans	Written	Attached	Received 24/05/06
<b>F58</b>	DOFA	Evans	Written	Attached	

<b>QON No.</b>	<b>Department / agency</b>	<b>Senator</b>	<b>Hansard reference</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>F59</b>	DOFA	Evans	Written	Attached	Received 30/3/06

Please note that answers are due by 30 March 2006.

### **Written QON**

#### **F38**

1. What programs do the AEC conduct in Australian primary schools? How many schools ran, or requested, these programs? Are these programs run in regional and urban areas?
2. How much does the AEC budget for the provision of these programs?
3. I have sighted correspondence from various Bendigo schools stating that AEC assistance with school elections has been withdrawn. When and why did the AEC make this decision?
4. Will these programs be reinstated?
5. Has the AEC advised the Government that their allocated funding is restricting their ability to provide this service?

#### **F39—Medibank Private**

When is the scoping study on the sale of Medibank Private expected to be completed?

What are the options for the sale that are being considered – public float, placement etc.

Given that Medibank Private holds about 29% of the Australian market (36% in Queensland and about the same in Tasmania) what account is being taken of the competition implications of a sale?

What is the expected sale price?

#### **F40—Snowy Hydro**

What is the book value of the Commonwealth's 13% stake?

What is the range of estimates of the worth of Snowy as distinct from its book value?

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**F41 to F46—GENERAL QUESTION TO ALL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

1. How many grants have you issued to Hillsong Church, its associated corporations and entities? List name, price and duration of funding by department.
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**F47 to F52—GENERAL QUESTION TO ALL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

1. How many briefs have you forwarded to the DPP for 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05?
    - a. How many briefs were returned without action, and how many were actioned?
  2. For each year, what was the average time (as well as indicating the minimum and maximum time in each case) in which it took the DPP to...
    - a. Bring charges against the accused party
    - b. Formally bring the matter to a conclusion through either a verdict of guilty or not guilty, the entrance of a nolle prosequi or dropping the charges
    - c. Return the brief for no further action
  3. Did the department or agency forward any formal complaints to the DPP regarding the handling of the brief?
    - a. If so, give details.
  4. Did the department or agency forward any informal complaints to the DPP regarding the handling of the brief?
    - a. If so, give details.
- 

**F53—Australian Electoral Commission**

**Outcome 1: Australians have an electoral roll which ensures their voter entitlement and provides the basis for the planning of electoral events, and electoral redistributions.**

**Proof of Identity**

1. What additional administrative requirements would the new proof of identity requirements proposed by the Government, in the Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Electoral Integrity and Other Measures) Bill, entail for the AEC?
2. What is the estimated cost of any additional administrative requirements?
3. What training will the AEC need to provide staff with to ensure that they are able to manage any new administrative procedures resulting from these changes?
4. Has a training package or plan been designed? Who will provide staff with this training?

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**F54—Australian Electoral Commission**

**Outcome 2: Stakeholders and customers have access to and advice on, impartial and independent electoral services and participate in electoral events.**

**Electronic Voting**

1. Has the AEC investigated, or had discussions with the Government in respect to the implementation of an electronic voting trial?
  2. What were the conclusions of those discussions and or investigations?
  3. Has the AEC investigated the most suitable electronic voting system for such a trial?
  4. What is the estimated cost of such a trial?
  5. How much notice would the AEC need to implement such a trial?
  6. Have the AEC liaised with any of the relevant stakeholder groups to determine the most suitable locations of a trial?
- 

**F55—Australian Electoral Commission**

**Outcome 3: An Australian community which is well informed about electoral matters.**

**School Programs**

1. What programs or support do the AEC offer Australian primary schools?
  2. How many primary schools ran these programs or requested support in 2005?
  3. What is the annual cost of the provision of primary school programs and support?
  4. Is the 2005-06 AEC budget sufficient to ensure the provision of programs and support to primary schools?
  5. Has the AEC ceased to provide any programs or support to primary schools over the last 5 years?
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## **F56—Australian Electoral Commission**

### **Outcome 3: An Australian community which is well informed about electoral matters.**

#### **Advertising**

1. Has the AEC appointed any agencies to conduct, or consult on, advertising or community awareness programs in the last 12 months?
  2. If so, what work are they engaged in, or contracted to conduct?
  3. If so, what are the costs of these appointments?
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## **F57—Government personal staff**

The Department has provided a table showing the number of personal staff assigned to Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and Office Holders.

For each Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and Office Holder indicate the nominated home base of each personal staff member (e.g. Melbourne, Canberra). Do not provide the name of individual staff members.

In relation to the Leader of the National Party in the Senate indicate the nominated home base of each personal staff member. For each staff member who is not based in Canberra indicate the number of trips they have made to Canberra since 1 July 2005. Do not provide the name of individual staff members.

What was the total salary related costs of all Government personal staff in 2004-05?

What was the total annual salary cost of all Government personal staff from 1 July 2005 to 31 December 2005?

What was the total cost of allowances for all Government personal staff in 2004-05? (including travel allowance)

What was the total cost of allowances for all Government personal staff from 1 July 2005 to 31 December 2005? (including travel allowance)

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## **F58—Prime Minister's staff**

Can the Department provide details of all the trips undertaken by the Prime Minister's personal staff in November and December 2005.

List every trip, the date, the destination, the number of staff that travelled and the reason for the travel.

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### **F59—Office of evaluation and audit (Indigenous Programs)**

In relation to each of the eight programmed audits in progress at 30 June 2005, indicate (see page 352 of the Annual Report):

- whether they have been completed
- whether a report has been provided to the Department
- whether a report has been provided to the Minister
- when the audit will be completed

What programmed audits have been established since 30 June 2005? For each indicate the topic and scope of the audit.

In relation to the accountability audits requested by the Minister or initiated by the Director which were reported on in 2004-05 (see page 353 of the Annual Report), indicate for each:

- the topic and scope of the audit
- when the audit was completed
- when the audit was provided to the Department
- when the audit was provided to the Minister

Can a copy of each of these audits please be provided?

In relation to the accountability audit requested by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration (see page 353 of the Annual Report), indicate:

- when the request was made
- the topic and scope of the audit requested
- when the status of this audit (in progress/completed)

Have there been any other accountability audits either requested by the Government or initiated by the Director since 30 June 2005? If so, indicate the topic and scope of the audit.

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