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*Senator Minchin asked* Could you take it on notice to supply to the committee

- i. evidence that the ANAO had tabled reports in the caretaker period prior to the Regional Partnerships report?
- ii. evidence that the ANAO prior to the 2007 election had tabled reports during caretaker periods?

**Response:**

- i. Four reports were tabled during the 2007 caretaker period prior to the Regional Partnerships report.
- ii. The below table provides information on the number of reports tabled during the caretaker period of each of the last four elections.

Election year	Caretaker period	No. of days in period	No. of reports tabled
2007	17/10 - 3/12	48	6
2004	31/8 - 9/10	40	0
2001	8/10 - 10/11	34	2
1998	31/8 - 3/10	34	4

Details of reports tabled and tabling dates is at Attachment A.

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*Senator Robert Ray asked* could the ANAO provide the committee with a copy of the legal advice sought in relation to the timing of the tabling of reports during caretaker periods?

**Response:**

A copy of the legal advice sought in relation to the tabling of reports during caretaker periods is at Attachment B.

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*Senator Murray asked* I would ask you on notice whether you could provide to the committee at the earliest opportunity the real effects of the efficiency dividend cut and your views on whether it is manageable or whether it will have a negative effect on the broader fiscal objective of the government, which is to reduce unnecessary expenditure or wasteful expenditure?

**Response:**

The impact of the application of the one off 2% efficiency dividend on the ANAO amounts to a reduction of just over \$5 m over 4 years to ANAO resources. Coupled with the changes in ANAO estimates by the 0.25 per cent increase in efficiency dividend at the 2007-08 MYEFO, this takes the total impact of the efficiency dividend for the ANAO to \$7.5 m over 4 years.

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ANAO has historically managed cost pressures, including the impact of the application of the efficiency dividend and other unfunded shifts in our cost base, without material impact on product or quality but this is becoming more difficult, particularly as a small agency. Based on our early assessment of our future funding availability, areas where we are likely to need to decrease activity are through decreasing capacity to produce Better Practice Guides and reduced performance audit capability.

Better Practice Guides aim to improve public administration by providing a mechanism whereby better practices employed in organisations are recognised and promulgated to all Australian Government entities. Our emphasis is usually to identify, assess and articulate good practice from our knowledge and understanding of the public sector, as well as providing guidance in areas where improvements are warranted.

With respect to performance audit, we consider there are several areas we have previously identified as areas for improvement which would have strong flow on benefit to public sector administration both from an outcomes and a financial view point. In particular this includes contract and project management. Focused audit coverage (including production of Better Practice Guides in this area) would need to be deferred for the foreseeable future.

ANAO's resourcing position is subject to the ongoing budget process and consideration of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit.

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet has been provided with a copy of our responses to the above Questions on Notice.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Dianne Rimington  
Group Executive Director  
Corporate Support Group

