

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Additional Budget Estimates Hearing – February 2009

Department of Finance and Deregulation

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 3, Output 3.1.1

Topic: Topic: Mobile Personal Digital Assistants (PDA)

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Senator Fielding asked:

They are nearly obsolete after a year, when you think about the amount of development that is going into them. I am not interested in spending more of taxpayers' money, but if a senator or a member finds the tool extremely valuable and useful, could they buy the latest machine out of their own money and allow you to run the software on top? You may want to take that on notice. It is one point that I think is pretty important. I do not want to waste taxpayers' money. By the same token, they would not want me to be inefficient in what I am doing either. Does that make sense?

Answer:

There is a variety of Mobile Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) in the market and they are constantly changing to keep abreast of the market and suppliers maintain market share by ensuring the software on the devices is specific to the device itself. As such the devices that a company releases into the market are on the whole, proprietary and will only work with the designated software for that device. It would not be possible to design software that will work on every device no matter what the brand.

It would also not be feasible to support individually chosen MPDAs as the costs of infrastructure necessary to support the devices as well as the costs and associated requirements of implementing, testing, maintaining and replacing the devices for each Senator or Member would be considerable.