

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

Additional Estimates - February 2013
ANSWER TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General

Program 1: Support for the Governor-General and Official Activities

Outcome 1: The performance of the Governor-General's role is facilitated through the organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official household and property and administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system.

Topic: Making the Public Service more efficient

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: QoN 46

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 April 2013

Number of Pages: 2

Please provide an update of the savings achieved through pursuing further efficiencies in the way the public service operates (see media release by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Special Minister of State of 25 September 2012 http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2012/mr_1982012.html).

In addition, please provide the following detail:

Can you quantify the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates for reductions in air travel?

Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Has there been a reduction in the use of external consultants and contractors? Has this impacted on the Department/agency, and how? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Provide an update of moving recruitment advertising online. Is any recruitment still in printed materials, and if yes, why? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Has the department/agency reduced its printing costs? If no, why not? Have printing costs increased, and if yes why and how much? Has the five per cent savings target been achieved – if yes, how, or if it will not, why not? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Answer:

The Office manages its operations within the resources provided by Government through budget processes. The Office has reduced operational expenditure (including staffing and supplier expenses) over the past four years as part of a package of efficiency measures. The reduction in total supplier costs from 2008-09 to 2011-12 was 22%. The savings already achieved from 2008-09 to 2011-12 in the areas identified by the Government and to which this question relates are approximately 49%.

For domestic travel, as a general rule, all staff are required to travel economy class (except the Official Secretary and Deputy Official Secretary who are entitled to travel Business Class). In practice, the Official Secretary and Deputy Official Secretary travel in economy on domestic flights between Canberra and Sydney and to other destinations along the eastern seaboard, unless operational requirements dictate otherwise (e.g. carrying and working on sensitive material).

Consultants and contractors are engaged on an as needs basis for urgent and essential work that cannot be undertaken by existing staff.

All recruitment advertising is online.

The Office has minimal printing expenditure, primarily related to the Annual Report.