

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman
Outcome/Program: 1
Topic: Freedom of Information

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: 55

Type of question: Written

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

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- (1) Has the department/agency received any updated advice on how to respond to FOI requests?
- (2) What is the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for this financial year to date?
- (3) How many FOI requests has the Department received for this financial year to date?
- (4) How many requests have been denied and how many have been granted?
- (5) Has the department failed to meet the processing times outlined in the *FOI Act* for any requests? If so, how many and why?
- (6) Do any of these requests remain outstanding? If so, how many and why?

Answer:

- (1) Yes. The Office has received advice and guidelines as issued by the Australian Information Commissioner on its website at:
<http://oaic.gov.au/publications/guidelines.html>

The Office sought advice and guidelines from the AGS to improve its processing of FOI requests.

- (2) The total cost of the Office to process FOI requests this financial year to date has not been calculated and reported for this period. Costs are reported on an annual basis by the Attorney-General.
- (3) The Office received 71 requests for the period to 22 February 2013.

- (4) The Office granted 48 requests. Four requests lapsed or were withdrawn. One request was transferred in whole to another agency. Eighteen were denied.
- (5) The Ombudsman's office has met the processing time outlined in the FOI Act for all requests.
- (6) N/A.