

Senate Finance and Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Australian Public Service Commission

Budget Estimates Hearings 2003-2004, 29 May 2003

Question: PM74

Topic: APS Employment Database

Senator Carr asked:

1. In the Public Service Commissioner's annual report you concede there are still problems with the 'integrity of the data' on the APS employment database, especially in relation to 'quality and quantity' of the data. Can you confirm that?

Answer:

The Commission considers that maintaining and improving the quality of the APS Employment Database is essential to providing useful analysis. This work is ongoing, however, there has been improvement in the quality of data over the last twelve months.

Senator Carr asked:

2. What's the problem?

Answer:

The complexity of collecting data from over 90 agencies, using a variety of HR systems, means that data coming from agencies is sometimes not in the format we require, or is incomplete. Staff in the APSED team continue to work closely with agencies and vendors of HR systems to assist them in ensuring that their data complies with our requirements.

Senator Carr asked:

3. Have extra staff and/or resources been devoted to fixing it?

Answer:

We encourage agencies to provide data more regularly throughout the year, rather than in one larger amount at the end of the financial year, putting pressure on the APSED team to deal with an uneven workflow.

Extra staff have been employed to deal with the extra work load at the end of the year. Resources continue to be applied to liaising with agencies to encourage them to provide better quality data in a more timely manner.

In addition, planning has begun on a project that will, when fully implemented, ensure that some data verification currently done within the Commission be undertaken by agencies before they send data to APSED. This will ensure that data received by APSED has fewer errors.

Senator Carr asked:

4. Have any costs outside what you estimated been incurred because of the problems? How much?

Answer:

In addition to normal staffing, one extra employee at the APS 3-4 level has been employed on a non-ongoing basis for a year with salary cost approximately \$40,000 per year. Prior to this date, we also engaged extra processing staff as required. The cost for this for 2002-03 is approximately \$22,000.

Senator Carr asked:

5. What has the project cost to date? What is the total budget for it? Has that been altered?

Answer:

During 1998-99 and 1999-00 the Commission spent \$188,701 on a consultancy for the development of APSED. This amount includes changes made to APSED due to the introduction of the *Public Service Act 1999*. In addition to normal staffing levels, an amount of \$14,000 has been allocated annually for maintenance and enhancements to APSED. The price for APSED during 2001-02 (including staffing and administration costs) was \$1,076,000.

Senator Carr asked:

6. I understand the database was supposed to be a critical tool for workforce analysis and planning. What has happened to this critical work given the problems with the database?

Answer:

Despite problems with the quality and timeliness of data received from agencies, the edit checks and business rules applied in the Commission ensure that the data stored on APSED provides a reliable picture of APS staffing trends. This data was used extensively in the Management Advisory Committee report on Organisational Renewal, released earlier this year, as well as in the annual State of the Service and Workplace Diversity Reports. The first of a new series of research papers, Graduate Trends, was also released earlier this year.

Individual agencies also continue to use APSED data to supplement analyses of their own data, for workforce planning.

Senator Carr asked:

7. We have already covered the very distressing results of the Organisational Renewal report which makes clear that workforce planning has not been very well carried out in the past, and that it is critical to the future of the service. What are you doing to fix the problems with the database?

Answer:

As well as the steps outlined in answer to Questions 2 and 3, work is also underway on developing an internet interface, through which agencies will be able to access their own APSED data for workforce planning.

Senator Carr asked:

8. The annual report says you are 'working with agency heads to improve the data, and expect to have more reliable data as the basis for reporting in 2002/2003'. Is that in fact the case given we are close to the end of that period?

Answer:

We do not yet have complete data for all agencies for the 2002-03 financial year. However, data provided to date indicates that data quality continues to rise, as agencies and HR vendors become more familiar with the APSED requirements.

Senator Carr asked:

9. When do you expect you will have the system running at full strength rather than just providing 'more reliable data'?

Answer:

Due to the nature of administering a database such as APSED, work on improving data quality is ongoing.

Topic: Non-ongoing staff

Senator Carr asked:

10. I've been looking for comprehensive information on these non-ongoing employees and have found very little. At least not nearly the level of detail as there is for full-timers. Could you provide the following:
- (a) a breakdown of the number of non-ongoing staff by agency and by category comparing this year's figures with those of previous years.
 - (b) a statistical breakdown of the median length of service for these employees by agency.

Answer:

See Attachments A and B.

Topic: Cost of the APS Commission Office

Preamble

The Commission sets out its Outcome and Outputs and strategic priorities in its Corporate Plan – a copy of the *APS Commission Corporate Plan 2002-03 and Beyond* is attached as an indication of our approach (Attachment C). The Outcome and Output structure is included in the Portfolio Budget Statements with quantitative and qualitative performance information. The PBS also identifies the cost to Government of the Commission's Outcome and each of its Outputs and the revenue to be earned from other sources. The Commission reports in some

detail against this framework in its Annual Report. The Annual Report provides a public analysis of the Commission's performance against its Corporate Plan and budget commitments (PBS), including where we have encountered difficulties during the year, for example, our reporting in relation to the APS employment database during 2001-02. The Annual Report accounts for the Commission's expenditure of taxpayer funding.

The Commission receives funding from Government and relies on the sale of goods and services to earn revenue to fulfil the breadth of its legislated responsibilities. In particular, revenue generation is significant to the Commission's responsibilities relating to coordinating and supporting APS-wide training and career development and fostering leadership. These learning and development activities are undertaken in a competitive market place, which ensures that the Commission's products and services are of high quality, relevant and competitive.

Senator Carr asked:

11. I see from the PM and C Portfolio Budget Statement (p. 98) that next financial year the Commonwealth will spend over \$15 million on the Commission. What is the taxpayer getting for their money?

Answer:

Broadly the Commission contributes to the development of a confident, high quality, values-based and sustainable Australian Public Service (the Commission's *Outcome*)

The Commission's particular contribution is through:

- APS policy and employment services

Providing advice to Government and Agency Heads on APS policy and legislation, including in relation to the employment framework and SES staffing.

- Leadership, learning and development services

Promoting effective leadership in the APS and providing APS-wide learning and development activities.

- Organisational performance, promotion and support services

Promoting the APS Values and Code of Conduct and fostering better practice governance, people management, client service and workplace diversity.

- Evaluation services

Evaluating specific issues, maintaining a database of APS employees and reporting annually to Parliament on the performance and composition of the APS.

- Merit protection and other services

Conducting reviews of actions relating to APS employees' employment and breaches of the Code of Conduct, and investigating whistleblowing allegations.

The level of *Outputs* is set out in the Portfolio Budget Statements and Annual Reports.

Senator Carr asked:

12. How does that allocation compare with previous years?

Answer:

The Commission's appropriation from Government for the financial years 1999-00 to 2002-03 follows:

1999-00 (\$000)	2000-01 (\$000)	2001-02 (\$000)	2002-03 (\$000)
13,964	14,510	14,999	15,388

Senator Carr asked:

13. And you estimate you will raise over \$12 million from other sources. What are those other sources and are you on track to make that figure.

Answer:

The major sources of these funds are the sales of goods and services, for example, fees from leadership, learning and development activities, employment related fee for service activities (which include constituting Independent Selection Advisory Committees and scribing services) and gazette subscriptions.

The Commission's performance to the end of May this financial year indicates that we are on track to achieve this target and the likely end of year position is that we will earn \$12.295 million from these sources.

Senator Carr asked:

14. What did you earn from outside over the 2002/03 and years before that?

Answer:

Revenue from other sources:

1999-00 (\$000)	2000-01 (\$000)	2001-02 (\$000)	2002-03 (\$000) estimate
8,611	10,595	9,998	12,240

There has been a steady incline in the Commission's earnings from the sale of goods and services during this period which arises from increased demand for the leadership, learning

and development program and employment related services such as independent selection advisory committees.

Senator Carr asked:

15. Can you do everything you want to do on a total budget, including Commonwealth and outside earnings, of a little over \$27 million a year.

Answer:

The short answer is that the Commission has been able to consistently meet the commitments in the Portfolio Budget Statement and its corporate plan through reliance on funding from Government and growth in funding derived from the sale of its goods and services.

The Commission's funding from the sale of goods and services is estimated to account for over 40% of its revenue during 2003-04. The sale of goods and services is particularly significant to the Commission's responsibilities relating to coordinating and supporting APS-wide training and career development and fostering leadership. These activities are undertaken in a competitive market place, which ensures that the Commission's products and services are of high quality, relevant and competitive. It is also a potentially volatile market as agencies can choose their source of supply and this means that the Commission must devote considerable effort to managing its budget and cashflows through the year.

The continued strength of revenue from these sources has led to the Commission establishing an accumulated surplus both as a contingency against a decline in the sale of goods and services and as a possible source of funding for future initiatives. Accordingly, the Commission is on a solid financial footing.

Senator Carr asked:

16. Can you give me a breakdown of the Commission's spending – how much goes on staff etc?

Answer:

	1999 -00 (\$000) actual	2000 -01 (\$000) actual	2001 -02 (\$000) actual	2002 -03 (\$000) estimate	2003 -04 (\$000) estimate	2004 -05 (\$000) estimate	2005 -06 (\$000) estimate	2006 -07 (\$000) estimate
Employees	9,499	10,907	10,988	13,797	14,406	14,732	15,066	15,407
Suppliers	8,596	11,647	11,062	11,882	11,938	12,232	12,385	12,904
Depreciation and amortisation	1,110	1,148	1,212	1,207	1281	1,317	1,352	1,387
Disposals of assets	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net losses from sales of assets	411	-	9	-	-	-	-	-
Write down of assets	104	17	91	15	15	15	15	15
Borrowing								

costs expenses	-	15	43	28	13	30	32	32
CUC	-	-	-	699	-	-	-	-
Total	19,720	23,759	23,405	27,628	27,653	28,326	28,850	29,745

There has been a steady incline in the Commission's expenditure on employees and suppliers during the period which has tended to parallel increases in activity that has underpinned increased earnings from the sale of goods and services.

The cost of employees also increases each year as a result of increases in salaries and related costs.

Non-ongoing staff: agency by employment category, June 2000

Attachment A

Agency	Specified term	Specified Task	Irregular or Intermittent	Total
AFFA	226	3	7	236
Attorney-Generals	36		3	39
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal	32		9	41
- AUSTRAC	7			7
- Australian Customs Service	51			51
- Family Court of Australia	16		4	20
- Federal Court of Australia	111		42	153
- HREOC	27	2	3	32
- National Crime Authority	51			51
- National Native Title Tribunal	32		2	34
- Office of the D.P.P.	28			28
Communications IT & the Arts	221	2	1	224
- Aust. Broadcasting Authority	10	1		11
- Aust. Communications Authority	26			26
- Aust. National Maritime Museum	36	1		37
- National Library of Australia	15		1	16
- National Museum of Australia	33			33
Defence	1474			1474
- Defence Housing Authority	57	3	6	66
DEST	153			153
DEWR			169	169
- Australian Industrial Registry	15		2	17
- Comcare	54	1		55
- Worksafe Australia	19			19
Environment and Heritage	319	15	2	336
Family and Community Services	734		1	735
- Centrelink	1868		13	1881
Finance and Administration	33	84	189	306
- Australian Electoral Comm.	93			93
- ComSuper	19	1	4	24
Foreign Affairs & Trade	169	1	1	171
- ACIAR	9			9
Health & Ageing	377			377
- Aust. Institute of Family Studies	5	2		7
- Aust. Institute of Health	40			40
- ANZFA	23			23
- ARPANSA	16			16
- OPSR	1			1
DIMIA	270		10	280
Industry Tourism & Resources	142			142
Prime Minister & Cabinet	21	1	1	23
- Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.	274		48	322
- ATSIC	133	1		134
- AIATSIS	8	2		10
- ANAO	3			3
- Commonwealth Ombudsman	11	2		13
- Office of National Assessments	6	1		7
- APS Commission	16	23	7	46
Transport & Regional Services		54		54
- National Capital Authority	13			13
Treasury	65	1		66
- Australian Bureau of Statistics	344			344
- ACCC	52		76	128
- ASIC	189			189
- Australian Taxation Office	1640			1640
- Productivity Commission	1			1
Veterans Affairs	127	4		131
- Australian War Memorial	50		12	62
Total	9801	205	613	10619

,Source: APSED

Non-ongoing Staff: Agency by employment category, June 2001

Agency	Specified term	Specified Task	Irregular or Intermittent	Total
AFFA	375	50	35	460
Attorney-Generals	59	1	3	63
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal	27		6	33
- AUSTRAC	4		1	5
- Australian Customs Service	61	4		65
- CrimTrac Agency	1			1
- Family Court of Australia	71		40	111
- Federal Court of Australia	125		25	150
- Federal Magistrates Service	2			2
- Federal Privacy Commissioner	3			3
- HREOC	12		1	13
- ITSA	19			19
- National Crime Authority	46	1		47
- National Native Title Tribunal	27		5	32
- Office of the D.P.P.	30			30
Communications IT & the Arts	280	2	18	300
- Aust. Broadcasting Authority	12	1		13
- Aust. Communications Authority	14			14
- Aust. National Maritime Museum	21	2		23
- National Library of Australia	77		1	78
- National Museum of Australia	97			97
- NOIE	9			9
Defence	1480	84	102	1666
- Defence Housing Authority	106	5	9	120
DEST	138			138
DEWR	156		45	201
- Australian Industrial Registry	16			16
- Comcare	24	1		25
- Worksafe Australia	24			24
Environment and Heritage	361	18	11	390
- Australian Greenhouse Office	27			27
- GBRMPA	10		14	24
Family and Community Services	539	1	14	554
- Centrelink	2070		11	2081
Finance and Administration	70	6	174	250
- Australian Electoral Comm.	58		1	59
- ComSuper	47	1	7	55
Foreign Affairs & Trade	118	5	7	130
- ACIAR	12			12
Health & Ageing	490		122	612
- Aust. Institute of Family Studies	7	1		8
- Aust. Institute of Health	43			43
- ANZFA	20			20
- ARPANSA	11			11
- OPSR	1			1
DIMIA	200	11	16	227
Industry Tourism & Resources	161	2	1	164
Prime Minister & Cabinet	45		2	47
- ANAO	3	2	1	6
- Commonwealth Ombudsman	12			12
- Office of National Assessments	8	6		14
- APS Commission	20	5	8	33
TSRA	4	1		5
DORATSIA	1			1
- Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.	173		49	222
- ATSIC	196			196
- AIATSIS	11	2		13
Transport & Regional Services		71		71
- National Capital Authority	26			26
Treasury	67	1		68
- Australian Bureau of Statistics	217			217
- ACCC	46	2	2	50
- ASIC	101		135	236
- Australian Taxation Office	671			671
- Productivity Commission	6			6
Veterans Affairs	196	12	7	215
- Australian War Memorial	74		30	104
Total	9438	298	903	10639

,Source: APSED

Non-ongoing Staff: Agency by employment category, June 2002

Agency	Specified term	Specified Task	Irregular or Intermittent	Total
AFFA	173	9	47	229
Attorney-Generals	218	4	3	225
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal	18	.	10	28
- AUSTRAC	7	.	1	8
- Australian Customs Service	90	3	.	93
- CrimTrac Agency	9	.	1	10
- Family Court of Australia	22	0	101	123
- Federal Court of Australia	133	.	21	154
- Federal Magistrates Service	3	.	4	7
- Federal Privacy Commissioner	10	.	.	10
- HREOC	14	0	5	19
- ITSA	29	0	0	29
- National Crime Authority	76	18	.	94
- National Native Title Tribunal	38	.	2	40
- Office of the D.P.P.	27	2	0	29
- Office of Film & Literature Class	4	.	.	4
Communications IT & the Arts	231	0	4	235
- Aust. Broadcasting Authority	16	1	0	17
- Aust. Communications Authority	8	.	0	8
- Aust. National Maritime Museum	16	2	.	18
- National Archives of Australia	49	.	36	85
- National Library of Australia	50	0	2	52
- National Museum of Australia	76	.	.	76
- NOIE	15	0	.	15
Defence	1584	62	140	1786
- Defence Housing Authority	192	0	1	193
DEST	151	2	.	153
- Australian Research Council	12	.	.	12
DEWR	141	.	3	144
- Australian Industrial Registry	27	.	0	27
- Comcare	41	0	0	41
- Worksafe Australia	15	0	.	15
Environment and Heritage	355	2	50	407
- Australian Greenhouse Office	24	.	.	24
- GBRMPA	8	.	8	16
- National Oceans Office	8	.	.	8
Family and Community Services	385	0	2	387
- Aust. Institute of Family Studies	15	1	.	16
- Centrelink	1320	29	18	1367
Finance and Administration	46	0	201	247
- Australian Electoral Comm.	43	0	3	46
- ComSuper	37	1	4	42
Foreign Affairs & Trade	151	11	19	181
- ACIAR	8	.	.	8
Health & Ageing	350	0	66	416
- Aust. Institute of Health	36	.	5	41
- ANZFA	12	.	1	13
- ARPANSA	9	.	.	9
- OPSR	2	.	.	2
DIMIA	296	3	13	312
- Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.	102	1	81	184
- ATSIC	163	3	.	166
- AIATSIS	38	1	.	39
- Torres Strait Regional Authority	7	1	.	8
Industry Tourism & Resources	177	2	36	215
Prime Minister & Cabinet	11	0	2	13
- ANAO	2	1	1	4
- Commonwealth Ombudsman	10	0	1	11
- Office of National Assessments	8	9	.	17
- APS Commission	12	0	9	21
Transport & Regional Services	69	.	.	69
- National Capital Authority	1	.	.	1
Treasury	56	2	2	60
- Australian Bureau of Statistics	615	.	.	615
- ACCC	42	0	6	48
- ASIC	282	.	4	286
- Australian Taxation Office	1306	.	457	1763
- Productivity Commission	7	.	.	7
Veterans Affairs	176	14	18	208
- Australian War Memorial	86	.	29	115
Total	9770	184	1417	11371

,Source: APSED

Non-ongoing staff at 30 Jun 2000: agency by median length of service in months

Attachment B

AFFA	7
Attorney-Generals	7
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal	6
- AUSTRAC	4
- Australian Customs Service	4
- Family Court of Australia	15
- Federal Court of Australia	11
- HREOC	12
- National Crime Authority	6
- National Native Title Tribunal	13
- Office of the D.P.P.	5
Communications IT & the Arts	8
- Aust. Broadcasting Authority	4
- Aust. Communications Authority	3
- Aust. National Maritime Museum	13
- National Library of Australia	16
- National Museum of Australia	11
Defence	5
- Defence Housing Authority	4
DEST	5
DEWR	4
- Australian Industrial Registry	13
- Comcare	7
- Worksafe Australia	6
Environment and Heritage	10
Family and Community Services	7
- Centrelink	2
Finance and Administration	16
- Australian Electoral Comm.	7
- ComSuper	7
Foreign Affairs & Trade	12
- ACIAR	5
Health & Ageing	4
- Aust. Institute of Family Studies	5
- Aust. Institute of Health	11
- ANZFA	11
- ARPANSA	11
- OPSR	1
DIMIA	6
Industry Tourism & Resources	4
Prime Minister & Cabinet	6
- Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.	6
- ATSIC	5
- AIATSIS	8
- ANAO	0
- Commonwealth Ombudsman	11
- Office of National Assessments	12
- APS Commission	10
Transport & Regional Services	4
- National Capital Authority	16
Treasury	5
- Australian Bureau of Statistics	8
- ACCC	1
- ASIC	12
- Australian Taxation Office	3
- Productivity Commission	0
Veterans Affairs	12
- Australian War Memorial	10
Total	5

,Source: APSED

Non-ongoing staff at 30 Jun 2001: agency by median length of service in months

AFFA	2
Attorney-Generals	4
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal	5
- AUSTRAC	14
- Australian Customs Service	4
- CrimTrac Agency	5
- Family Court of Australia	9
- Federal Court of Australia	9
- Federal Magistrates Service	4
- Federal Privacy Commissioner	8
- HREOC	19
- ITSA	8
- National Crime Authority	11
- National Native Title Tribunal	5
- Office of the D.P.P.	5
Communications IT & the Arts	7
- Aust. Broadcasting Authority	7
- Aust. Communications Authority	10
- Aust. National Maritime Museum	19
- National Library of Australia	3
- National Museum of Australia	5
- NOIE	10
Defence	9
- Defence Housing Authority	10
DEST	4
DEWR	5
- Australian Industrial Registry	4
- Comcare	7
- Worksafe Australia	15
Environment and Heritage	10
- Australian Greenhouse Office	9
- GBRMPA	4
Family and Community Services	9
- Centrelink	4
Finance and Administration	17
- Australian Electoral Comm.	6
- ComSuper	4
Foreign Affairs & Trade	20
- ACIAR	7
Health & Ageing	5
- Aust. Institute of Family Studies	16
- Aust. Institute of Health	21
- ANZFA	13
- ARPANSA	12
- OPSR	0
DIMIA	4
Industry Tourism & Resources	8
Prime Minister & Cabinet	3
- ANAO	6
- Commonwealth Ombudsman	6
- Office of National Assessments	20
- APS Commission	9
TSRA	9
DORATSIA	9
- Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.	9
- ATSIC	4
- AIATSIS	14
Transport & Regional Services	3
- National Capital Authority	13
Treasury	8
- Australian Bureau of Statistics	3
- ACCC	5
- ASIC	12
- Australian Taxation Office	14
- Productivity Commission	9
Veterans Affairs	7
- Australian War Memorial	9
Total	7

,Source: APSED

Non-ongoing staff at 30 Jun 2002: agency by median length of service in months

AFFA	12
Attorney-Generals	4
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal	6
- AUSTRAC	14
- Australian Customs Service	8
- CrimTrac Agency	10
- Family Court of Australia	10
- Federal Court of Australia	12
- Federal Magistrates Service	10
- Federal Privacy Commissioner	8
- HREOC	6
- ITSA	5
- National Crime Authority	9
- National Native Title Tribunal	8
- Office of the D.P.P.	5
- Office of Film & Literature Class	5
Communications IT & the Arts	14
- Aust. Broadcasting Authority	10
- Aust. Communications Authority	6
- Aust. National Maritime Museum	7
- National Archives of Australia	8
- National Library of Australia	15
- National Museum of Australia	17
- NOIE	9
Defence	9
- Defence Housing Authority	8
DEST	4
- Australian Research Council	11
DEWR	4
- Australian Industrial Registry	6
- Comcare	5
- Worksafe Australia	7
Environment and Heritage	10
- Australian Greenhouse Office	5
- GBRMPA	16
- National Oceans Office	5
Family and Community Services	6
- Centrelink	3
Finance and Administration	25
- Australian Electoral Comm.	10
- ComSuper	10
Foreign Affairs & Trade	21
- ACIAR	26
Health & Ageing	5
- Aust. Institute of Family Studies	12
- Aust. Institute of Health	17
- ANZFA	16
- ARPANSA	11
- OPSR	10
DIMIA	5
- Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.	8
- ATSIC	7
- AIATSIS	10
- Torres Strait Regional Authority	13
Industry Tourism & Resources	9
Prime Minister & Cabinet	19
- ANAO	12
- Commonwealth Ombudsman	4
- Office of National Assessments	21
- APS Commission	13
Transport & Regional Services	7
- National Capital Authority	26
Treasury	9
- Australian Bureau of Statistics	9
- ACCC	6
- ASIC	11
- Australian Taxation Office	4
- Productivity Commission	11
Veterans Affairs	9
- Australian War Memorial	11
Total	8

,Source: APSED