

## Estimates 2006-07 — Budget Estimates, May 2006

## Questions on Notice Index—Finance and Administration portfolio

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F1	DOFA/AEC	Murray	F&PA 10-11 24/05/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—Are you happy for the protocol to be tabled?</p> <p>Senator Minchin—I am sorry, I have not been following the discussion. I would like to talk to the Special Minister of State, who has the direct responsibility, but I have no immediate objection. We will have a look at that.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—I believe I have sighted it at some stage. I was not certain whether it had been tabled here or had been provided to the opposition members or obtained by them in another way. The witnesses are not entirely sure how it might have been communicated, and that is fair enough. But, for the completeness of the record, it might be useful to have it tabled.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—I will discuss it with the Special Minister of State.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—It is not a secret document and it ought not be a secret document. Senator Murray, who is a long-term member of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, is more likely than I to have knowledge of whether it has been tabled at that committee.</p> <p>Senator MURRAY—I do not know. I am aware of its existence, and I would assume it would be an open document. If I might, I will request that the minister, if able, come back prior to the AEC's evidence; that would be useful.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—I will see what I can do, Senator Murray.</p>	Received 7/07/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F2	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 23-24 24/05/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—That is a fair point, but what I am interested in is the information on which DOFA based its decision. I understand that, beyond the detail that is provided to you, you are not able to provide the information or answer questions. That is a given and I accept that. It is perfectly logical. If I want to try to ask those sorts of questions I can go to the originating department, which is Defence, but what I am asking you to provide the committee with is the information which was provided to your department on which the parliamentary secretary based his decision to approve the three payments for four individuals.</p> <p>Dr Watt—There are a couple of points to make about these: one, there are privacy issues, because the payments do concern an individual or individuals; two, due to the circumstances under which these act of grace payments are made it is not easy for the department to form an independent view, even it chose to, from what is provided by the Department of Defence. The circumstances are unusual in act of grace payments. In other payments we can and we often do, but in these ones we cannot. We are happy to take the question on notice and see what we can give you.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—This might assist you, Dr Watt. I do not want to know the names of individuals—and I am sure you would understand that that is the case. I think there would be obvious implications if names were given. I do not expect it and I do not want it. But I would like a little more detail about what is a very significant payment of \$53,128. That is one of the payments. We know it is for one death and injury to, it appears, three others. It seems to me not unreasonable for DOFA, for example, to be able to say, for example—let me give you a hypothetical—that the death was the result of a motor vehicle accident or whatever. I am just talking about the broad information and background. I do not want personal detail. I agree with you that it would not be appropriate. But I am sure the department could do a little better than just saying ‘one death and three injuries’. Maybe you might reflect on that, have a bit of a look at that, and be able to distil a little more information for the committee in the hours ahead. That is not an unreasonable request, and I would ask you to have a look at that and perhaps come back a bit later in the day.</p>	Received 31/10/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F3	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 25 24/05/06	<p>Mr Hutson—There are a number of actions that are pending. In particular, there are High Court proceedings, proceedings in Western Australia and a number of other proceedings. They all relate to a fraud against the department back in 1999.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—So this is just an update of a counterclaim seeking damages of \$4.3 billion. Who does that come from?</p> <p>Mr Hutson—The information I have is that a number of the respondents are in various civil proceedings where the Commonwealth has undertaken to try to recover some of the money.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Have we previously explored the names of the individuals or companies involved?</p> <p>Mr Hutson—I do not believe we have.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—I am sure that is publicly available; I do not think that would be a matter of legal contention. If you have not got it here now, could you give us an update—</p> <p>Mr Hutson—Sure.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—on the individuals and companies that are counterclaiming?</p> <p>Mr Hutson—It would probably be easier if I take the question on notice.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—If you could provide that by the end of the day or something, I would appreciate it. Which parties are involved in making the \$4.3 billion counterclaim?</p> <p>Dr Watt—What we have previously done on this matter, subject to the agreement of the minister for finance, is to provide the shadow spokesperson with a briefing outside the estimates committee, given that some of these matters are legal and potentially touchy. Subject to the minister's agreement, we would be happy to do that in this case.</p>	Received 14/08/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F4	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 27-28 24/05/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—He said to me:</p> <p>I was particularly disappointed by Mr Suur’s statement that no-one has raised Australian workplace agreements, AWAs, as an issue as part of their reason for their departure from Finance. For your information, I transferred to another Australian Public Service agency—</p> <p>and I will not give you the details of where from, but it is within the department of finance. He continues:</p> <p>I have, as you will see in the attached document—which I gave to the company employed by Finance to conduct my exit interview, with my explicit permission that they could communicate not only its contents but also my name to the Finance executive—inter alia clearly articulated my concern at the manner in which Finance employs AWAs in negotiation with staff.</p> <p>I ask you to go back and check the material that Mr Suur gave to me in evidence. This is a direct response to Mr Suur’s evidence of last November.</p> <p>Dr Watt—We will take that on notice and have a look at it. The important point to make is that the Department of Finance and Administration executive does not see individual responses. We look at responses that are aggregated by criteria, but we do not see the individual ones.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—I did ask Mr Suur a specific question and he was quite categorical in his response. It appears to me to be inaccurate on the face of the information I now have available.</p> <p>Dr Watt—One point that would help is if you have a broad approximate idea of the departure date of the individual. That would help us track it down. I can assure you that it would not be used to try to ascertain who the individual was.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—I will seek to provide that. I will come back to you.</p> <p>Dr Watt—If you have that it would help, but we will certainly have a look for it.</p>	Answered in correction to evidence received 3/08/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F5	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 29 24/05/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—I am going to get to that category in a moment in terms of the last budget. Just so that you understand, it is our concern that it does appear that the contingency reserve is developing into a general policy reserve. That is on the data available that we have been able to aggregate over time. You may or may not agree. What we would like is an itemised list of policy announcements made in the 2001 and 2004 election campaigns that consequently came out of the contingency reserve.</p> <p>The other thing is that, if we look at these figures over time, there is a fluctuation up and down. In the budget of 2000-01 the total contingency reserve at 2004-05 on the sheet is almost \$12 billion. As I said, there is a fluctuation up and down. But there is a trend. If we look at the budget contingency reserve in this year's budget—for 2006-07—the contingency reserve has grown to almost \$25 billion.</p>	Received 31/10/06
F6	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 30 24/05/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—I want to come to this year's budget. What are the specific announcements in this budget that are included in the contingency reserve? I am aware of one: the superannuation package of \$6.2 billion. I will get to that in a bit more detail soon. But are there any others that have been allocated to the contingency reserve?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—The government has made public that certain allowances have been made in the contingency reserve. We would have to trawl through and get those, but I will give you an example. It would be done this way for commercial reasons—and now I am not quite sure I am right, but Defence headquarters is an example. Do not take that as absolute gospel; I will have to check. It is for that type of reason, where there may be commercial negotiations to be undertaken, a decision has been made and an amount of money allocated, but it is not to be announced at this point.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Could you give me a list of those, because I cannot find it listed as an aggregate.</p> <p>Mr Bowen—No, you will not. We will have to have a trawl through it.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—It is a very useful trawl because it is a very useful set of information that is damn difficult to identify.</p>	Received 31/10/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F7	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 33	<p>Mr Bowen—To preface this, our costings of a number of government election commitments noted that part or all of the cost of the commitments had been included in decisions taken prior to the calling of the election and published in the 2004 pre-election economic and fiscal outlook. In such cases, Finance had undertaken work on those items consistent with its normal role prior to the calling of the election. Those government election commitments where this applied were: 100 per cent Medicare: making GP services more affordable than ever before; increased funding for bushfire preparedness; Scoresby Freeway; Pakenham bypass; additional funding for regional arts; Promoting an Enterprise Culture; building our national transport future; the coalition's plan for higher standards and values in schools; securing Australia's interests; and local government: building on our relationship.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—So those 10 programs were costed by the department—not illegitimately; that is a matter of fact—before they were announced in the election campaign. That is a matter of fact.</p> <p>Mr Bowen—We have indicated that we worked on them.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Yes.</p> <p>Mr Bowen—Whether we fully costed them or not, we worked on them.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—You worked on them, and I am sure you diligently, effectively, efficiently and accurately worked on them if the truth be known.</p> <p>Dr Watt—There is an assumption there, and that is that whatever might have been announced in the election campaign was the same as what might have been worked on in advance. That is not necessarily correct.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Have you checked?</p> <p>Dr Watt—I do not have that information here.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Could you take that on notice. Could you let me know on notice where there was a difference and what the difference was.</p> <p>Dr Watt—We will see what we can do.</p>	Received 6/09/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F8	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 36 24/05/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—I have not been caught yet; I am trying to find out what the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry are up to. So that \$10 million is in that aggregate figure?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—More than likely. I have to check, because that is expense measures since the 2005-06 MYEFO. I doubt it would be anywhere else.</p> <p>Dr Watt—We can take that on notice and confirm it this afternoon.</p>	Received 6/09/06
F9	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 37 24/05/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—The bill that has gone before parliament is \$3.74 billion. Senator Minchin, presumably you will handle this in the Senate. The second reading speech of Mr Nairn, who handled the matter in the House of Representatives, says \$3.74 billion, with no explanation. We would like to know what we are appropriating money for when we approve an appropriation in the parliament.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—Yes. I imagine that in speaking to the legislation there would be some revelation of detail if it is not already there. That would be normal. But in terms of a separate statement, I am happy to reflect on that.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—If you could. To front up and have \$3.74 billion, bang, that is it, does not seem to be satisfactory.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—I am sure that in speaking to the bill some more detail would be proffered. Whether there is a more formal way of doing that, I am happy to look at it.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—I am sure that by the time it gets to the Senate, just a list of the substantial appropriations that make up the \$3.74 billion would be useful.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—Yes, and quite properly.</p>	Received 14/08/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F10	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 39 24/05/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—There would certainly be cash transfers—fairly small amounts, I accept that—to other government statutory authorities, cash amounts that are not necessarily spent to varying degrees in 2006-07? There must be.</p> <p>Senator Minchin—I was just thinking of the \$15 million which we provided for the development of an international swimming centre in Adelaide. I think that is being transferred to the state government. It probably will not all be spent in 2006-07, but that is an example of a smaller amount.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—There is a whole range of government statutory and primary industry organisations. Mr Bowen, perhaps you could take this notice: what other programs exist where there is a cash transfer outside government departments, interstate or independent and maybe Commonwealth statutory organisations, and it is not spent in the year of the transfer?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—Yes, I am happy to take that on notice. I think that is the best way to deal with it.</p>	Received 20/10/06
F11	DOFA	Evans	F&PA 47	<p>Senator CHRIS EVANS—I accept that they are the rules under which you operate. I am not very happy with them, but I accept that that is the process. If the through-life support costs increasing by \$625 million do not set off a red light in Finance, did the decision to lower the contract specifications and the performance requirements of the Tiger—when Defence decided to pay the same amount of money for a reduced capability—trigger a red light inside Finance?</p> <p>Mr Roach—We are simply not privy to that.</p> <p>Senator CHRIS EVANS—So you were not informed in 2002 when they reached an agreement with the contractor to reduce the specifications required in the contract?</p> <p>Mr Roach—I would want to check that, but I believe that is the case.</p> <p>Dr Watt—We can take that on notice, but I think Mr Roach is right. We would not normally expect to be privy to that.</p>	Received 6/09/06



QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F12	DFOA	Sherry	F&PA 70-71 24/05/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—When you calculate the indices, presumably you would calculate them in the lead-up to the budget preparation and then provide the data to the appropriate department for the appropriate program, would you?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—They are updated periodically and provided to agencies, yes.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—And that is the figure they are required to use?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—Yes.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Could you take it on notice to provide me with the details of those?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—That is not information that the government has chosen to put on the public record in the past.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—I know that; that is why I am asking. I did not think it was.</p> <p>Dr Watt—We could take it on notice.</p> <p>Mr Bowen—We can take it on notice, but I am flagging the position that has been taken to date.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—At least can you give a list of the different indices? What are they, and what is their application to various departments and programs? It does not seem to be unreasonable to me.</p>	Received 6/09/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F13	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 73 24/05/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—Is that across all agencies or is Defence still exempt from that?</p> <p>Dr Watt—Defence does pay an efficiency dividend. It is now paying an efficiency dividend as a result of the decision taken in last year's budget. It is being phased in and only applies to—I think these are the words—'non-operational, non-military components of Defence activities'. There was an increase in what we attributed to be non-operational and non-military this year. It was a small increase.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—What was the figure?</p> <p>Dr Watt—It is 1¼ per cent. The matured dividend is 1¼ per cent but I am not aware of the actual rate of the defence phase-in at the moment. We can find out that for you.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Could you take that on notice. Do you know the phase-in period for the non-operational expenses?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—We will check that.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—And is that the only exception to the 1.4 per cent?</p> <p>Dr Watt—One and a quarter per cent.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Sorry, 1.25 per cent.</p> <p>Dr Watt—No. The ABC and the SBS do not pay the efficiency dividend, because they have triennial funding arrangements. CSIRO pay it only on their administrative component under their triennial funding arrangement. There may be one or two other small exceptions, but they are the substantial ones.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Perhaps you could take on notice where there are exceptions—if there are any—and what the natures of the exceptions are.</p> <p>Dr Watt—Yes.</p>	Received 6/09/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F14	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 73 24/05/06	<p>Mr Bowen—You may have 60 per cent labour costs, 40 per cent other. You would apply an index that had that sort of proportion.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Right. With this index, are there significant differences across departments or across programs within departments?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—There are differences, yes.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Is the bulk of the public sector on one index?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—I would have to check on that. Given that the Commonwealth public sector is fairly heavily staff based in its departmental expenditure and given that most departments are in that category, I suspect that there would be one index that is more commonly used than others, yes.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Can you take on notice what the index is and where the exceptions are?</p> <p>Mr Bowen—We will take on notice the proportions, yes.</p>	Received 6/09/06
F15	DOFA	Sherry	F&PA 74 24/05/06	<p>Senator SHERRY—Where is your paper coming from? That is basically it. Where is it being sourced from?</p> <p>Mr Hutson—We have an agreement with a company that provides us with stationery supplies. They have a range of paper options available from the supplier. I am advised the majority of the paper used by the department is Australian paper.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Do you have any idea of the exception?</p> <p>Mr Hutson—No, I am afraid I do not.</p> <p>Dr Watt—Sitting here right now, no, but I think we can probably get the answer relatively quickly.</p> <p>Senator SHERRY—Okay, you can take it on notice: the source of the paper, the proportion that is Australian, the proportion that is not Australian and, for that which is not Australian, which country or countries it is coming from and the reasons for that.</p> <p>Mr Hutson—Okay.</p>	Received 31/10/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F16	AEC	Faulkner	F&PA 93	<p>Mr Campbell—We engaged two companies some little time ago after the 2004 election. They are BMF Advertising, and the public relations company is Haystac Public Affairs.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—Who are the principals of BMF Advertising?</p> <p>Mr Campbell—I have met them but I do not carry their names in my head. I will have to take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—Do you know the principals for Haystac?</p> <p>Mr Campbell—No, it is the same thing.</p>	Received 7/07/06
F17	AEC	Faulkner	F&PA 102 24/05/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—Do you know what the fee-for-service arrangements are?</p> <p>Mr Campbell—No. As I said, I cannot get that.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—Could you perhaps provide the fee-for-service arrangements for both BMF Advertising and Haystac Public Relations? Could you take that on notice?</p> <p>Mr Campbell—Yes, we certainly will.</p>	Received 11/07/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F18	AEC	Faulkner	F&PA 102 24/05/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—Fair enough. What about the tender process for Haystac?</p> <p>Mr Dacey—Because they were reappointed—</p> <p>Mr Campbell—No, Haystac are new.</p> <p>Mr Dacey—No, Haystac are—</p> <p>Mr Campbell—Sorry. Yes, they were reappointed. Because there was an option in their—</p> <p>Mr Dacey—But there was a tender process—</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—Yes, but there must have been an original tender.</p> <p>Mr Dacey—There was, prior to 2004, so we can give you the details of that.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—You might also provide information on that for the committee.</p> <p>Mr Campbell—Yes.</p>	Received 7/07/06
F19	AEC	F&PA	F&PA 102 24/05/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—When you say ‘after the 2007 election’, is there a precise end date? I appreciate what that means, but does the contract have a more precise end date?</p> <p>Mr Campbell—Again, I do not have the contract. These are the details that we have been able to get through at this hour of the night. I can take that on notice. I suspect that it would be until after the election or a month or so after the date of the election. That would be my guess. That is just speculation. We will come back to you on that.</p>	Received 7/07/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F20	AEC	Carr	F&PA 106 24/05/06	<p>Mr Bodel—We are aware of Kingston Investments. We have pursued the normal activities we pursue in attempting to obtain a disclosure from Kingston Investments but they have not made a disclosure to date.</p> <p>Senator CARR—Is it the fact that they have registered at Guangzhou International Trade Centre in Guangzhou an impediment to you undertaking such an investigation?</p> <p>Mr Bodel—Clearly we can pursue these matters as far as possible within the law in Australia. That means that we can pursue them right up to the point of taking them before a court. We will go as far as we have to.</p> <p>Senator CARR—At what point do you say that it is not likely that a return is going to be made for 2004-05 and you launch court proceedings?</p> <p>Mr Bodel—I am not sure in the case of that particular entity. I would have to take that on notice and get back to you.</p>	Received 7/07/06
F21	AEC	Carr	F&PA 110 24/05/06	<p>Senator CARR—Mr Campbell, are you able to advise the committee of the commission's view as to the feasibility of such a recommendation?</p> <p>Mr Campbell—This report was before I came into the commission. I would have to check that. Checking addresses and identities when people are offshore obviously creates some difficulty. I would not like to speculate without looking at the fine detail. I am not across that report.</p> <p>Senator CARR—Would you be prepared to take that on notice?</p> <p>Mr Campbell—Sure.</p>	Received 7/07/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F22	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 8 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—He would be at the feet of a master. One final thing: do we have any prospect of getting an answer to F30 and F58 in the next few weeks or not? You would know that, wouldn't you, Parliamentary Secretary?</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—I am not sure about F58 but I do know that F30 is with the minister's office at the moment.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—Could we have it this morning? Will the answer be tabled this morning? That would be helpful.</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—We will see what we can do.</p>	Received 9/08/06
F23	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 8 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—And F58?</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—I am sure the minister is keeping an eye on proceedings.</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—I doubt that. Things are in your capable hands.</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Get a life, I say.</p> <p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—I agree with you.</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—What about F58?</p> <p>Senator FAULKNER—One thing we can be sure of: the minister's minders keep a very close eye on these things.</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—I will follow this up for you.</p>	Received 11/07/06
F24	DOFA	Ian MacDonald	F&PA 10 25/05/06	<p>Ms Clarke—Just to confirm: there are no minority parties under the Parliamentary Entitlements Act now.</p> <p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay. So that makes it easy: will you just confirm that no-one is getting more than two mobile phones? That is all. Take it on notice.</p>	Received 2/08/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F25	DOFA	Ian MacDonald	F&PA 10 25/05/06	<p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—I would of course argue with you on one of our coalition groups of people, but I hear what you say. Just for any purposes of the parliamentary entitlements that you would administer, could someone give me a definition of what are office holders and those who would, by whatever description, get entitlements beyond what senators and members would get?</p> <p>Ms Clarke—We will take that on notice.</p>	Received 11/07/06
F26	DOFA	Moore	F&PA 16 25/05/06	<p>Senator MOORE—Have you got a budget stream for the cost of training electorate staff?</p> <p>Ms Clarke—We certainly operate to a budget. I do not have the figures with me at the moment.</p> <p>Senator MOORE—Can I ask for that on notice as well? I could not find it when I was looking at it and it could be that I need the training on how to read the budget papers. There is one particular question I was going to ask about the training that was provided on the budget process. I am interested in the take-up across-the-board on that particular training option.</p>	Received 11/07/06



QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F27	DOFA	Moore	F&PA 18 25/05/06	<p>Senator MOORE—Can I find out what the uptake of the budget training was?</p> <p>Ms Mason—Yes, certainly.</p> <p>Senator MOORE—That could be taken on notice. This has been offered but I do not think that it has been offered a lot and I would like to see what the interest was in it. The other sphere of training on which I want to ask some questions is the team conflict management stream. On notice, can you tell me the number of staff who took that option up? I do not wish to know where because that would be breaching privacy, but just in terms of what the interest was in that and the numbers in that particular training course that made it one that was able to continue. You mentioned that some courses needed a core number to attend. On the conflict one, I would like to know what the core number is. In terms of popularity—and this is on notice as well—in the range of courses you offer, what are the top three? The other questions concern cultural awareness training in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and dealing with people from a non-English-speaking background. Are those courses available?</p>	Received 11/07/06
F28	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 22 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—The only reason I am seeking that date, Parliamentary Secretary, is that if it does clash we will relieve you of the obligation to meet the timing. I would like the 1 June figures, if you could take that question on notice. We do not often put a prospective question on notice, one that goes into the future, but this way it will not be hard. It will not generate any extra work because your systems will throw it up. I would like to know what the 1 June figure is. You may not be able to tell me, obviously, until right at the end of June.</p>	Received 11/07/06

<b>QON No.</b>	<b>Department / agency</b>	<b>Senator</b>	<b>Hansard reference</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>F29</b>	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 24 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—I am not sure what I am asking, so I will clarify the question. I am on a fishing expedition—you understand that. How many times has the minister granted an exemption on application by a member of parliament about salaries, and in what circumstances? That is an easy way of covering it, because it covers both your possibilities.</p> <p>Ms Mason—It does, and that is a question that we would need to take on notice.</p>	Received 11/07/06
<b>F30</b>	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 24 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Let's make it easy: let's go back two financial years. You need search no further than this financial year and the previous financial year. I think it was at about that time that I found or had confirmed that Mr Georgiou and Senator Harradine had been granted some exemption. I was only asking because I was knocked back. I was trying to find out what the consistent criteria would be in these cases; I never have. Perhaps you can take that part of the question on notice.</p> <p>Ms Mason—Certainly, Senator.</p>	Received 11/07/06
<b>F31</b>	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 24 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Are all three non-government staff in the opposition 86?</p> <p>Ms Clarke—I am sorry, I do not have that information. I would assume so, but I cannot be specific.</p> <p>Dr Watt—We will see if we can confirm that, too.</p>	Received 11/07/06
<b>F32</b>	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 26 25/05/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—Senator Colbeck, could you take this on notice: does the Prime Minister in each case exercise that responsibility himself or is it delegated? If it is delegated, to whom has it been delegated? What is the nature of the delegation?</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—Certainly.</p>	Received 26/10/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F33	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 28 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—The next series of questions about this report is going to have to be taken on notice because I would not expect that you would have the detail at all. I ask on notice what the home bases of these eight staff are now. I do not want you to identify individuals. I just want to know whether they are all Melbourne or Canberra based.</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—We will take that on notice.</p>	Received 11/07/06
F34	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 28 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—I will give you a series of questions rather than have responses that you do not have information available et cetera. The home base was the first one. My second question is whether any of those eight are subject to a personal classification. The third question is whether any of those eight, but specifically the two senior advisers, are being paid outside the salary band. Do you understand that question?</p> <p>Ms Mason—I do.</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—The fourth question is what is the total estimated staff cost per financial year of these eight positions. That can only be a figure based, I assume, on one month multiplied by 12. In other words, you cannot guarantee the figure, but you should be able to give us an estimate as you did with Senator Boswell's 10 staff.</p>	Received 11/07/06
F35	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 29 25/05/06	<p>Ms Mason—We have not been given any reasons for the decision to allocate those positions to the Cabinet Policy Unit.</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Okay. Where is the home base for the two positions? Are they subject to personal classification? Are they paid above the salary band? Are their contracts signed by the Prime Minister as the employing minister?</p>	Received 11/07/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F36	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 29 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—If your systems do not throw this up, you can ignore this next question. I will try to make the question absolutely fair and compare apples with apples. Can you take on notice how many senior advisers were employed in the government at the end of March 1997? Do you understand? All the staffing changes with the transition to government had probably been completed by then. Can you compare that with the 1 May figures from this year? I want to see how many senior advisers there are and what the difference is in the number of senior advisers over that period of time. I am not asking for it year by year or anything else—I just want one figure compared with the other.</p> <p>Ms Mason—So it was end of March 1997 compared with—</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Yes, but if you find that your systems tell you what they were in February or May but do not tell you how many there were in March, then please vary it up accordingly at that end.</p> <p>Ms Mason—Our staff establishments are normally prepared as at the first of each month, so—</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Would you like me to vary the question accordingly?</p> <p>Ms Mason—As 1 April is close to the end of March, would that—</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Very appropriate.</p>	Received 11/07/06
F37	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 29 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Could I ask about the total travel bill of Mr Robb's staff, from the point of his appointment to 1 May? Could I ask how much travel allowance his staff has claimed, from the date of his appointment to 1 May? I may or not get an answer to this—I understand that, Parliamentary Secretary. You might reflect on why I asked for these figures to be produced five days before. I could have asked these questions in PM&amp;C far more simply if I had known; nevertheless, I probably got a hint out of the questions answered and had not read them in time. Was there any explanation as to why the Cabinet Policy Unit now has two media advisers? With the original explanation as to its purpose, this seems a very strange decision.</p>	Received 19/07/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F38	DOFA	Faulkner	F&PA 30 25/05/06	<p>Senator FAULKNER—Just so that I understand the time frame, as a backbencher Mr Robb had one staff member prior to 1 February 2006. I will ask a different question and you can explain it to me, just so that I am clear. On the document entitled ‘Establishment variations—government—1 February to 1 May’, Mr Robb is listed as having an additional five staff. On the document entitled ‘Government personal employees, 1 May 2006’, there are eight. Could you let me know when those increases were made? You became a parliamentary secretary in January 2006. Do you have that available? I am just interested in the timing of the allocation of positions for Mr Robb. We know the broad parameters of it, because of the tabulation that has been provided.</p>	Received 19/07/06
F39	DOFA	Ray	F&PA 31 25/05/06	<p>Senator ROBERT RAY—So you are telling me that the Rem Tribunal is capable of adding to the list if it so desires.</p> <p>Ms Mason—I would need to clarify that. It is some time since we have focused on this issue. We did some time ago, when we realised that the head of authority did not exist. I would have to refresh my memory rather than potentially give you misleading information.</p> <p>Senator ROBERT RAY—Could you let me know, on notice, if it can be rectified, what head of power it can be rectified under so that I know where to take it up again at some later time.</p> <p>Senator Colbeck—Certainly.</p>	Received 11/07/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F40	DOFA	Lundy	F&PA 33 25/05/06	<p>Ms Fleming—There are a range of committees taking forward the smartcard framework. It is taken forward through the Chief Information Officer of the Authentication Working Group, which we chair. There is also a technical reference group which we chair, which includes a range of agencies and representatives from state chief information officers and the Smartcard Industry Association. We could provide you with a full list of membership.</p> <p>Senator LUNDY—Yes, please. Going back to the main working group that Ms Steward referred to, I think she mentioned Tax, A-G's, Human Services and some others. What were the others?</p> <p>Ms Fleming—There are 33 agencies on the authentication working group. In order not to get all of them wrong, I would prefer to provide a list, if that is acceptable.</p>	Received 7/07/06
F41	DOFA	Lundy	F&PA 37 25/05/06	<p>Senator LUNDY—That is a different approach to consultation, though, than sitting around a table with a group of equal partners in the program, if you like, through their working groups. Perhaps you could tell me how many meetings of that nature you have had with organisations advocating human rights, civil liberties and privacy related issues in relation to this card.</p> <p>Ms Steward—I would like to take that on notice. I would like to check to be able to give you an accurate number.</p>	Received 7/07/06

QON No.	Department / agency	Senator	Hansard reference	Question	Comments
F42	DOFA	Lundy	F&PA 37-38 25/05/06	<p>Senator LUNDY—Dr Watt, perhaps you could pass this onto the minister, whoever that may be. Does the government put a priority on consulting with organisations representing the interests of citizens or consumers as part of the development of the smartcard framework? What level of priority is placed on that? It is really a policy question—how committed is the government to making sure that consultation is as wide as possible and takes into account some of the more concerned groups in the community who do not appear to have had a fair opportunity to not just provide input but to be actively consulted as part of the development of this framework document?</p> <p>Dr Watt—I am sorry, Senator, I was diverted.</p> <p>Senator LUNDY—Why isn't the government making a greater effort to actively consult with organisations representing either citizens or consumer interests and/or civil human rights interests in relation to this type of technology as part of your consultation for the overall framework document? I am not talking about the human services card. That is a shemozzle I will leave my colleagues to pursue. I am talking about the AGIMO framework document.</p> <p>Dr Watt—As Ms Steward said to you, the government and AGIMO have made a fair effort to consult with such groups. If you are asking me why the government is not making a greater effort, I am happy to take that on notice and give you an answer.</p>	Received 7/07/06
F43	DOFA	Lundy	F&PA38 25/05/06	<p>Senator LUNDY—That was really what I was getting to. My understanding is that AGIMO still has that outreach role in providing advice on what is common in IT standards issues across all agencies and departments.</p> <p>Ms Steward—That is correct. We continue to do that, particularly where it relates to archival issues or other electronic records management that is primarily with Archives. We work very closely with them.</p> <p>Senator LUNDY—Could you take on notice providing me some more information about that, particularly any material you can reference that looks at the issue of problems associated with material in proprietary formats.</p>	Received 7/07/06

<b>QON No.</b>	<b>Department / agency</b>	<b>Senator</b>	<b>Hansard reference</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>F44</b>	DOFA	Heffernan	F&PA 85 25/05/06	Senator HEFFERNAN—I want to give notice that I want to put some questions to DOFA on notice. Witnesses will be pleased to know that these questions have nothing to do with them or, probably, anyone else in the room, as they are about the sale of Snowy Hydro. I want to question along the lines of what special dividend will be coming out of Snowy Hydro before it is sold. And I want to raise the question of the reverse onus. The original understanding of the government was that there was going to be a 75 per cent vote required in four years to remove the cap on the ownership of shares; overnight, that has been converted to the direct opposite, where the assumption will be that the cap will come off and there will be a 50 per cent vote of the shareholders to keep the cap. Finally, I ask: hands up all those people who think we should sell Snowy Hydro. Thank you, Mr Chair.	Received 6/09/06
<b>F45</b>	DOFA	Carr	Written	Attached	Received 27/07/06
<b>F46</b>	DOFA	Carr	Written	Attached	Received 7/07/06
<b>F47</b>	DOFA	Carr	Written	Attached	Received 11/07/06
<b>F48</b>	DOFA	Sherry	Written	Attached	Received 31/10/06
<b>F49</b>	DOFA	Sherry	Written	Attached	Received 14/08/06
<b>F50</b>	DOFA	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 6/09/06 Amended answer rec'd 21.03.07
<b>F51</b>	AEC	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 6/09/06 Amended answer rec'd 21.03.07
<b>F52</b>	CGC	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 6/09/06 Amended answer rec'd 21.03.07
<b>F53</b>	ComSuper	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 6/09/06 Amended answer rec'd 21.03.07
<b>F54</b>	CSS	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 6/09/06 Amended answer rec'd 21.03.07
<b>F55</b>	PSS	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 6/09/06 Amended answer rec'd 21.03.07



<b>QON No.</b>	<b>Department / agency</b>	<b>Senator</b>	<b>Hansard reference</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>F56</b>	FFMA	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 6/09/06 Amended answer rec'd 21.03.07
<b>F57</b>	DOFA	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 20/10/06
<b>F58</b>	AEC	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 20/10/06
<b>F59</b>	CGC	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 20/10/06
<b>F60</b>	ComSuper	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 20/10/06
<b>F61</b>	CSS	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 20/10/06
<b>F62</b>	PSS	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 20/10/06
<b>F63</b>	FFMA	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Received 20/10/06
<b>F64</b>	AEC	Mason	Written	Attached	Received 7/07/06
<b>F65</b>	DOFA	Ludwig	Written	Attached	Sent to DOFA 14/07/06 Received 6/09/06

Please note that answers are due by 7 July 2006.

### **Written QON**

#### **F 45**

What changes have been made to the recruitment of Comcar drivers over the past eighteen months?

How many drivers have been recruited during that period?

Of those, how many were employed through labour hire firms?

Can you confirm that a labour hire company Ready Workforce is being used to employ drivers?

If so, how many during the last eighteen months?

There is another labour hire firm called Kelly's. Has that firm been used as well?

How many drivers have been recruited through that firm.

Have any other labour hire firms been used?

Which ones?

What are the differences in pay and conditions between permanent drivers and those employed through labour hire companies?

Can you confirm that drivers employed through labour firms are paid less than permanently employed drivers?

What is the difference in remuneration scales and rates of pay?

What is the discrepancy between the remuneration and conditions enjoyed by drivers employed under their current industrial agreement and that received by drivers employed through labour hire companies?

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**F46**

What is the Department's current policy on the re-employment of former Comcar drivers?

Have you received expressions of interest from former Comcar drivers wishing to return to this employment? How many have you received starting 2003-04 until the present?

How many have been re-employed, casually or otherwise, in each year starting 2003-04?

What are the current total numbers of Comcar drivers on the Department's books: full-time, part-time and casual (please provide these details separately) by state territory? Please provide this information for 2003-04 and 2004-05.

Is it intended to employ more drivers? Please provide the anticipated establishment numbers, by state/territory and by employment status (full-time, part-time and casual) for the remainder of 2005-06 and for 2006-07

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**F47 (This question also sent to DPS)**

How does the Quarantine facility currently protect MPs and Senators' inboxes from SPAM?

Does it have any other benefits?

How much does it cost to protect MPs and Senators inboxes?

Is this facility funded by DPS (PM&C) or MPS (DOFA) or both?

Please provide details of funding arrangements given the quarantine facility is operable in both Parliamentary and Electorate Offices.

Why is this facility not extended to parliamentary electorate and personal staff?

Do any Ministerial staff have access to this protection?

Do any staff working for Government members and senators have such protection?

Do staff of the Government Communications Unit have access to this quarantine service?

Do staff of the Government Members Secretariat have access to this quarantine facility?

Do any other DPS or Parliamentary staff have access to the quarantine facility?

If so, please nominate numbers of staff, their work locations and classification levels?

Does the Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Services or staff of her office have access to this facility?

What prevents DPS from offering the quarantine facility to MPs' and Senators' staff? Is the issue simply one of cost or are there other factors involved?

If there are other factors, please provide a detailed explanation of these?

What analysis of work efficiency versus cost was undertaken at the time the decision not to extend quarantine protection was made?  
Please provide a copy of this evaluation.

How much would it cost to protect the inboxes of MPs and Senators staff with the quarantine facility?

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**F48**

Itemise all the announcements in the 2001 and 2004 election campaign that had their funding and detail that funding that was included in the contingency reserve prior to announcement in the relevant election campaign.

Provide a reconciliation by function and sub-function between Budget and MYEFO of changes for each of those two years.

On Wage Cost Indexes, on what basis have the forward estimates been set?

Have the forward estimates provided for a reduced rate of indexation than would otherwise be the case if the AIRC/SNA indexation arrangements had continued to apply?

Quantify these amounts for the forward estimates by program.

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**F49**

What is the total expected cost of the Telstra sale by advisers and departmental costs?

Precisely how much has been spent on advisers and on departmental costs?

What legal advice has been received on the sale of Medibank Private and who from?

Can that legal advice be provided to the Opposition?

Is the entity a mutual?

Has it been confirmed that the sale can proceed and that the entity is not mutual?

For the Tuggeranong Office Park, what rent has been paid in the previous financial years?

Is it the intention of the Commonwealth the \$102.661 million into the Tuggeranong office park sinking fund in 2008-09 and pay \$100 to purchase the asset?

If this does happen, will rent be paid after 2008-09? If so, how much?

If this doesn't happen, will rent be paid after 2008-09? If so, how much?

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#### **F50 - F56 QUESTIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AND THE AGENCIES CONSTITUTED UNDERNEATH IT**

(1) What sum did the department or agency spend during 2005-2006 on external legal services (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor and any others).

(2) What sum did the department or agency spend on internal legal services.

(3) What is the department or agency's projected expenditure on legal services for 2006-2007.

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#### **F57 – 63 QUESTIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AND THE AGENCIES CONSTITUTED UNDERNEATH IT**

The following questions relate to the purchase of executive coaching and/or other leadership training services by the department/agency, broken down for each of the last four financial years.

Where available, please provide:

1. Total spending on these services.
  2. The number of employees offered these services and their salary level.
  3. The number of employees who have utilised these services and their salary level.
  4. The names of all service providers engaged.
  5. For each service purchased from a provider listed in the answer to the previous question, please provide:
    - a. The name and nature of the service purchased.
    - b. Whether the service is one-on-one or group based.
    - c. The number of employees who received the service.
    - d. The total number of hours involved for all employees.
    - e. The total amount spent on the service.
    - f. A description of the fees charged (e.g. per hour, complete package).
    - g. Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:
      - i. The location used
      - ii. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
      - iii. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part.
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#### **F64**

1. With respect to the Australian Electoral Commission (the Commission) in the last calendar year or financial year you have records for what is the total number of days of sick leave and unscheduled leave taken by the Commission's employees? Over the same period, what was the average number of days of sick leave and unscheduled leave taken per Full Time Equivalent employee of the Commission
  2. What is the sick leave entitlement allowable to the employees of the Commission as part of the terms of their employment (under the Certified Agreement or individual contracts)?
  3. Does the Commission monitor and review the employees' use of sick leave entitlement? Has the procedure changed in the last 12 months?
  4. What initiatives, if any, has the Commission undertaken in the past three years to address absenteeism?
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#### **F65**

##### **QON Department of Finance and Administration regarding the Customs v Peter Tomson Case**

1. Please provide all documents forwarded to the Department of Finance and Administration from the Australian Customs Service. Please provide all correspondence, notes and memos relating to this case.

2. Is there any avenue of appeal for Mr Tomson given the Minister's negative decision for an Act of Grace payment?