

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2011-2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: 1.1.4 – Support services for government operations
Topic: Cabinet and Sub-Committee Meetings

Senator: Fifield

Question reference number: 142

Type of question: Written

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Number of pages: 1

Question:

- 1. How much time is spent preparing papers/submissions for Cabinet and Sub-Cabinet Committee meetings?**
- 2. How often must papers/submissions for Cabinet and Sub-Cabinet Committee Meetings be redrafted or resubmitted? Please provide example of why this would happen. (i.e. last minute policy changes or redate papers due to items not being discussed when initially scheduled).**

Answer:

1. Data is not collected on the time spent authoring Cabinet papers, submissions and memoranda. The amount of time spent drafting Cabinet documents would vary from item to item according to the complexity of the matter, consultation requirements (for example, consultation with the Office of Best Practice Regulation if a Regulatory Impact Statement was required), financial implications (if any) and other due diligence requirements. It would take an unreasonable amount of time and resources across the Australian Government to obtain this type of data.
2. Internal clearance processes vary amongst departments and ministerial offices. The Cabinet Secretariat in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet liaises with authors of Cabinet documents and undertakes a role in relation to ensuring standards are met with respect to the quality and timeliness of papers. This is seen as an ongoing process for the development of a final product rather than a series of milestones and as such, the type of data sought is not captured and recorded. Cabinet documents are re-drafted during the development process for a number of reasons, such as including updated information and complying with regulatory requirements.