

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013-2014

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance and Deregulation

Outcome/Program: General

Topic: Public Service Efficiencies

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: F76

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 12 July 2013

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- b) 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?
- c) 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?
- d) 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:

- a) – b) Refer to the response to F62 at the October 2012 Supplementary Budget Estimates for estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates.
- c) – d) Refer to the response to F58 at the February 2013 Additional Estimates.

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013-2014

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Electoral Commission

Outcome/Program: General

Topic: Public Service Efficiencies

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: F76

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Number of pages: 2

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Answer:

- a) The AEC does not record travel data in a way that readily allows answers to be provided in the class of travel booked. Business class air travel is limited on domestic flights to SES and for non-SES where a business case can be presented and supported by either the Deputy Electoral Commissioner or the Electoral Commissioner. International travel must be approved by either the Deputy Electoral Commissioner or the Electoral Commissioner.

Travel requests that involve business class travel will also continue to be rigorously assessed based on the requirement for the travel to be undertaken, value for money and available budget. The AEC will manage travel budgets on an ongoing basis and manage within existing resources.

The AEC will continue to utilise video conferencing as much as possible to achieve savings on business flights.

- b) The use of external consultants and contractors is determined on a case-by-case basis and are only employed where existing AEC employees do not have the required skills and capacity. The AEC will continue to manage the expenditure on external consultants and contractors in light of this. The AEC will manage the use of external consultants and contractors on an ongoing basis and manage within existing resources.
- c) The AEC used on line advertising as an adjunct to APS Jobs and newspaper advertising for much of last financial year. AEC managers were satisfied with the response from the market and have accepted the move to online advertising for major metropolitan centres. Given the dispersed nature of the AEC, regional newspapers may be used from time to time where managers identify a specific need based on past recruitment activity/results.

Estimated annual saving of \$12,000.

- d) The AEC undertakes a limited hard copy print run for most publications. People are directed to soft copies on the intranet/internet.

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
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Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: ComSuper
Outcome/Program:
Topic: Public Service Efficiencies

Senator: Ryan

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Answer:

- a) Travel is only undertaken where it represents efficient, effective and economical use of Commonwealth resources. ComSuper complies with the Commonwealth's policy of the Lowest Practical Fare for Official Domestic Air Travel. The ComSuper Travel Policy requires staff to consider cost effective alternatives such as teleconference or video conferencing as alternatives to air travel. ComSuper undertakes a minimal amount air travel. As such, it would be an unnecessary diversion of resources to estimate the savings associated with air travel.

- b) ComSuper engages contractors and consultants only where the required skills are not available in ComSuper and where it represents efficient, effective, ethical and economic use of Commonwealth resources. This is consistent with ComSuper's existing practices and will have no adverse impact on the agency. Contractors and consultants may be engaged on a needs basis and, as such, the number of consultants and contractors that may need to be engaged each year over the forward estimates cannot be fully determined.
- c) ComSuper moved to the government requirement to advertise recruitment online, and no longer use print media from 1 July 2012. ComSuper will continue to comply with this requirement, ensuring that all recruitment is online only. It would be an unreasonable diversion of resources to estimate the savings associated with recruitment advertising online.
- d) ComSuper has already implemented a range of savings measures to reduce overall printing costs. In relation to internal printing, during 2011-2012, ComSuper replaced its printer fleet with a more efficient set of Multi-Functional Devices that require staff to 'Swipe to Print'. ComSuper does not record data on printing in a way that readily allows detailed answers to be provided. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve a significant diversion of departmental resources. In general, for internal printing, ComSuper has reduced its paper consumption by 25 % and equipment maintenance and support costs by 43% since the introduction of these devices.

ComSuper also produces printed material for member communications including annual member statements and, where necessary, publications to meet statutory reporting obligations such as ComSuper's Annual Report to Parliament. ComSuper plans to further reduce printing costs through exploring alternate methods of member communications including, where practicable, electronic media. Estimated savings for forward estimates are dependent on the success and rate of take-up of such initiatives and, as such, are yet to be determined.

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013-2014

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation

Outcome/Program:

Topic: Public Service Efficiencies

Senator: Ryan

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Answer:

- a) CSC does not quantify estimated savings. It has its own travel policy in place.

Flights are booked on the basis of business needs. CSC budgets on a financial year basis. It is not part of the “forward estimates” process.

- b) Consultant and contractors are only retained on the basis of business needs. CSC budgets on a financial year basis. It is not part of the “forward estimates” process.
- c) Most recruitment is advertised online. CSC may use non-online advertisements to capture specific audiences. CSC budgets on a financial year basis. It is not part of the “forward estimates” process.

- d) Printing is done on the basis of business needs (see response to F77). Electronic documents and filing are used wherever possible. CSC budgets on a financial year basis. It is not part of the “forward estimates” process.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
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Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Future Fund Management Agency

Outcome/Program:

Topic: Public Service Efficiencies

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Answer:

- a) As noted in F75, the costs of operating the Agency and making investments of the Future Fund are met from the assets of the Future Fund not via budget appropriations. Nonetheless, the Agency maintains close oversight and control of its costs. The Agency's policy is that all travel within Australia and New Zealand must be at economy class for all staff. Travel to other destinations may be in Business Class. All travel is subject to the value for money and best fare requirements of the travel procurement requirements.
- b) In accordance with its legislation and business model, the Fund uses external advisers, consultants and investment managers. All external arrangements are considered on the basis of the expected costs and benefits and the availability of suitably skilled resources.
- c) The Agency's recruitment advertising costs are modest and we already make use of online advertising sources to a large extent. We expect to continue to use online

advertising extensively, using print advertising only where this is expected to be beneficial to the identification of suitable candidates.

- d) The Agency does not print significant volumes of material. Where printing is required, we will continue to source appropriate providers in accordance with the Commonwealth procurement rules.