

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

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Public Service Commission

Outcome/Program: Cross Portfolio

Topic: Public Service Efficiencies

Senator: Ryan

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Type of question: Written

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Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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:

1. The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) requires that all staff travel on economy class for domestic short haul trips. This policy change has achieved a reduction in the cost of domestic short haul travel. The APSC does not budget at an expense code level therefore savings on air travel in the forward estimates cannot be quantified.
2. External consultants and contractors are engaged in limited circumstances, for example, where the required expertise is not available within the Commission, an independent opinion or advice is required, or a short term project or activity where the output is required or to be produced within a tight timeframe that cannot be absorbed by a work team. Consultants and contractors will continue to be engaged only on a case by case basis i.e. not a programmed expense item, and will be subject to a best value for money assessment, and where funds are available.

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3. The APSC currently undertakes recruitment advertising almost exclusively online, and has done so since July 2011. As a small agency with a low volume of advertising, further savings will be small. However, budgeting is not undertaken at this level and future savings cannot be readily quantified.
4. The APSC has in place a range of measures that have contributed to a reduction in printing costs. Such as:
 - availability from the Commission website of electronic versions of publications that users can “print on demand”
 - reduced range of publications that are produced and circulated in hardcopy and subject to limited print run(s) e.g. numbers of copies produced
 - implementation of an electronic records management systems which has reduced the number and volume of paper based records
 - double sided black and white printing is set as default on printing devices
 - implementation of the Whole of Government Stationery and Office Supplies (SOS) Panel arrangement is expected to provide an estimated savings of \$15,000 per annum for the procurement of paper.

As the APSC does not budget at an expense code level, overall savings in printing costs in the forward estimates cannot be readily quantified.