

Senate Finance & Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Australian Public Service Commission

Estimates 2004-2005, Supplementary written questions November 2004

Question: PM 2 – Australian Public Service Commission

Topic: ANAO Audit Report No. 10 2004-2005, *The Senate Order for Departmental and Agency Contracts*

Hansard Page:

Senator Murray asked:

At page 51 the ANAO has concluded that all FMA agencies would benefit from implementation of contract training courses, or a review of current courses, to ensure that the Senate order requirements are adequately covered and that procurement staff receive relevant guidance. How is the APS Commission contributing to meeting these training needs?

Answer:

The APS Commission currently offers training courses in contract management and planning and conducting tenders for APS and EL staff within the APS, as well as in-house tailored programmes in these areas. These programmes are regularly updated to include any new policy or procedural changes. Recently, all training providers were sent updates on the:

- Annual Procurement Plan Guidelines,
- Compliance Requirements for Existing Panels Checklist,
- 2005 Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines, and
- Updates issued by the Department of Finance and Administration

The current course manual for contract management (*Getting that Contract Right*) has a specific section on reporting requirements, which includes reference to the Senate Orders and in particular to Senator Murray's original motion and the key elements of that motion.

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Senator Murray asked:

At page 52 the ANAO has summarised outcomes of a recent DOFA forum for agency procurement staff. The report states:

The incorporation of policy guidance in APS Commission courses has been discussed with the APS Commission, with the result that mechanisms have now been agreed for ensuring that developments in procurement policy are reflected in APS Commission training materials. (p52)

Please provide details of the mechanisms agreed.

Answer:

The mechanism in place is twofold. Firstly, the APS Commission ensures that information is sent to training providers and secondly, a clause has been inserted into the training provision contract putting responsibility on providers to ensure their manuals and other training material is up to date.

1. All new guidance material related to developments in procurement policy and procedures are sent electronically to the APS Commission's training providers. The training providers are also briefed three times a year to ensure that they are aware of any changes in policy that relates to their training delivery. Most recently, training providers were sent updates on the:

- Annual Procurement Plan Guidelines,
- Compliance Requirements for Existing Panels Checklist,
- 2005 Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines, and
- Updates issued by the Department of Finance and Administration

2. The APS Commission has included the following clause in its contracts with training providers:

Review of Contract Material

The Consultant will regularly review and update the Program Manual/training materials to reflect the requirements of the Public Service Act 1999 and the latest in government reforms and initiatives. These materials must be updated and issued to the APS Commission at least four weeks before the scheduled first delivery of the program. For assistance in this regard, please access the APS Commission's website –www.apsc.gov.au or contact the Project Officer.