

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department of Finance and Deregulation

Supplementary Estimates Hearing – October 2010

Outcome all Program all

Topic: Social Media

Question reference number: F30

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 3 December 2010

Number of Pages: 3

Senator Bernardi asked:

- a) Has the department instituted any policies or protocols that restrict or deny staff the use of YouTube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs? If yes, please explain what restrictions has been put in place. Why were these restrictions put in place?
- b) If no: Why not? (for example there may be legitimate reasons for some staff to access these sites for legitimate purposes).
- c) Are staff utilising these sites during work hours? If yes, how many hours are spent on these sites? What time are these sites most accessed (i.e. lunch time?).
- d) Will measures be introduced to restrict access to these sites?

Answer:

- a) Refer to Attachment A.
- b) N/A
- c) Refer to Attachment B.
- d) The Department of Finance, the AEC and ComSuper do not have any plans to further restrict access to social media sites. The Future Fund is currently reviewing its polices in this regard.

POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS TO RESTRICT OR DENY EMPLOYEES ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Agency	Policies /Procedures
Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance)	Finance has policies that restrict access to the use of online social media sites, forums, and blogs. Finance provides access to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The department's <i>Acceptable Use</i> ICT policy provides guidance on the use of social media sites.
Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)	The AEC has IT policies and general codes of conduct in place governing internet access and the use of social media. The AEC restricts access using blacklisting services under the category 'Social Networking', which prevents access to, sites such as Facebook. The AEC's internet access policies were put in place to ensure appropriate use of AEC facilities and equipment. The AEC has restricted access to online social media but employees can access some online discussion forums and blogs, for example, blogs.abc.net.au, www.govdex.gov.au, and blogs.america.gov, as these provide information, research and collaboration capability for staff on relevant government and election matters. Only those sites that do not contravene the AEC's internet access policies are available.
ComSuper	ComSuper has policies and protocols that restrict employee access to certain internet sites, including some social media pages. Access to the following categories of sites is denied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secure sites accessed with the HTTPS protocol, unless specifically exempted; • public email sites; • sites identified as containing malicious content; and • sites identified as potentially containing inappropriate content. The restrictions have been imposed in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain workplace efficiency and effectiveness; • maintain the security and integrity of ComSuper's network, by minimising the risk of outbound information leakage and minimising the entry of malicious, unwanted, or unauthorised code; and • prevent any adverse impact on ComSuper's reputation.
Future Fund Management Agency (Future Fund)	Future Fund employees are permitted to access Future Fund IT resources for incidental personal use. Such use must not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interfere with normal business activities; • involve excessive storage of non-business information or message; • be used to transmit jokes, chain letters, animation or graphics which are not in the scope of the user's employment; • be illegal, defamatory, discriminatory, vilifying, or otherwise inappropriate; • cause embarrassment or loss of reputation to the organisation; and • be likely to corrupt, damage or destroy the Future Fund's or anyone else's data, software or hardware.

c) TIME SPENT BY EMPLOYEES UTILISING SOCIAL MEDIA SITES DURING BUSINESS HOURS

Agency	Hours/Time
Department of Finance	Finance does not monitor the hours spent by staff on social media sites.
AEC	Sites allowed under AEC policies are used during business hours. A detailed record of internet access and usage is maintained for all users of AEC systems. This record is reviewed when dealing with specific staff management issues.
ComSuper	While ComSuper monitors staff access to the internet, there is no log of actual time spent utilising the internet.
Future Fund	Future Fund employees are permitted to make incidental personal use of IT resources. Time and duration is not currently monitored. All employees are required to adhere to the requirements of the <i>IT Security Policy Manual</i> , the <i>Policy on the Custody and Use of Public Property</i> and the APS Values and Code of Conduct.