

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

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance and Deregulation

Outcome/Program: 1/ 1.1

Topic: Administration and reporting of grants

Senator: Rhiannon

Question reference number: F3

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 2 December 2011

Number of pages: 1

Question: I understand that each agency determines, administers and reports its own grants process.

- a) What is the total amount of grants awarded each year by all agencies?
- b) How does your department evaluate or review the overall effectiveness of the grants being administered by each agency, i.e. that the expenditure meets the stated aims and goals of the agency who grants the money?
- c) It is often hard to find grants information on agency websites, and it does not paint an overall picture. Can you explain why there is no centrally published register or source of information on grants?
- d) Are you currently reviewing the new Grants guidelines?

Answer:

- a) Consolidated information on total grants awarded by all agencies is not available.
- b) Agencies, as part of better practice grants administration, should establish performance and evaluation measures for their granting activities. In addition, the Australian National Audit Office regularly undertakes performance audits of agencies grants programs which are made available to the public. Finance does not specifically evaluate the effectiveness of grants programs administered by individual agencies.
- c) *The Strategic Review of the Administration of Australian Government Grant Programs* (July 2008) recommended that a new centralised grants reporting system be developed, along with a range of other public information, transparency and accountability measures. The Government did not agree to the development of a new centralised reporting system, but instead implemented the reporting requirements contained in the *Commonwealth Grant Guidelines* (CGGs). These requirements currently involve an agency publishing, on its website, information on its individual grants no later than seven working days after the grant agreement for the grant takes effect.
- d) Finance is currently updating the CGGs to reflect minor legislative and policy changes.