

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance and Deregulation

Outcome/Program: 1/1.1

Topic: Grants pause

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: F38

Type of question: Written, and Hansard F&PA Committee, page75, 16 October 2012

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 30 November 2012

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Please provide a list of all grants that have been paused as part of the Government wide grants pause.
- b) What is the total value of the 280 grants programs that have been paused by the government?
- c) Please provide dates the Department of Finance consulted with each government department and agency regarding the grants pause.
- d) How was advice/instruction of the grants pause been provided to each government department and agency?
- e) On what dates were government departments and agencies notified of the grants pause?
- f) On what date were government departments and agencies instructed to implement the grants pause?
- g) Did the Department of Finance provide government departments and agencies with an 'end date' for the pause? If so, what is the date?
- h) If not, has the Department of Finance received any questions or enquiries from government departments and agencies about when the grants pause would end?
 - i. Please provide a list of government agencies and departments that have enquired about when the grants pause would end.
 - ii. Did the Department of Finance instruct government departments and agencies if they could communicate the date the pause would end to grant applicants?
- i) How were government departments notified of the grants pause (i.e. email, phone call)? If via email please provide a copy of the email instructing departments of the grants freeze.
- j) Did the Department of Finance instruct or advise government departments and agencies on how best to communicate the grants pause (including language and phrases to use),to grant applicants the media and other external stakeholders? If so, please provide a copy of the Department of Finance's advice?

Answer:

- a) On 27 August 2012, the Government decided to pause all grants rounds for 2012-13 which were not advertised, and advertised rounds which were not finalised. Information on individual grant rounds and programs were subject of deliberations by the Cabinet's Expenditure Review Committee and therefore is not publicly available.
Information on the related savings measure *Whole of Government Savings from Paused Grants Programs* is available in the MYEFO 2012-13 (page 204) and the Finance Minister's media release *Government Finds Savings in Uncommitted Grants Funding* of 22 October 2012.
- b) The total value of the grants paused is around \$17 billion over four years. This figure represents the total uncommitted funds at the time of the pause.
- c) In accordance with the authority of the decision by the Government, Finance sought information on grant rounds and programs from Portfolio Departments on 28 August 2012. During the process Finance discussed matters on a needs basis with some Departments. A list of these separate discussions was not maintained.
- d) On 28 August 2012, Finance released an Estimate Memorandum to Portfolio Departments advising them of the pause and asking for information on all upcoming grants rounds for 2012-13 which were not advertised, and advertised rounds which were not finalised. The Estimate Memorandum also asked Portfolio Departments to coordinate the response for all agencies within the portfolio.
- e) Refer answer d).
- f) Refer answer d).
- g) The pause ended with the release of the 2012-13 MYEFO.
- h)
- i. At various times Finance received queries from agencies regarding when a decision would be made on the grants that were paused. However, as the decision to end the pause had to be made by the Government, Finance could not provide a firm date at that time.
 - ii. The Department of Finance and Deregulation provided standard talking points to all Portfolio Departments to use as necessary.
- i) Refer answer d).
- j) See answer h) ii.