

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates Hearing – October 2012
ANSWER TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General

Program 1: Support for the Governor-General and Official Activities

Outcome 1: The performance of the Governor-General's role is facilitated through the organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official household and property and administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system.

Topic: Public Service Efficiency

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: PM79

Type of Question: Written

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

Number of Pages: 2

Please detail how the department/agency will achieve savings over the forward estimates through pursuing further efficiencies in the way the public service operates (see media release by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Special Minister of State of 25 September 2012 http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2012/mr_1982012.html).

In addition, please provide the following detail:

How will reductions in air travel spending be achieved? What is the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

What restrictions will be implemented for business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

How will the use of external consultants and contractors be reduced? How will this impact on the Department/agency? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

How will the department/agency manage moving recruitment advertising online? Will all future recruitment advertisement be online only? If not, explain why. What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

How will printing costs be reduced? Explain if and how the department/agency will reduce its printing costs by five per cent, or if it will not, why not? How will it be determined what documents will no longer be printed? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Answer:

The Office manages its operations within the resources provided by Government through budget processes. The Office has reduced operational expenditure (including staffing and supplier expenses) over the past four years as part of a package of efficiency measures. The reduction in total supplier costs from 2008-09 to 2011-12 was 22%. The savings already achieved from 2008-09 to 2011-12 in the areas identified by the Government and to which this question relates are approximately 49%.

For domestic travel, as a general rule, all staff are required to travel economy class (except the Official Secretary and Deputy Official Secretary who are entitled to travel Business Class). In practice, the Official Secretary and Deputy Official Secretary travel in economy on domestic flights between Canberra and Sydney and to other destinations along the eastern seaboard, unless operational requirements dictate otherwise (eg. carrying and working on sensitive material).

Consultants and contractors are engaged on an as needs basis for urgent and essential work that cannot be undertaken by existing staff.

All recruitment advertising is online.

The Office has minimal printing expenditure, primarily related to the Annual Report.