

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 11 February 2013

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE13/0460) PROGRAM – Internal Product

Senator Humphries (Written) asked:

Portfolio wide - Has the department/agency received any updated advice on how to respond to FOI requests? What is the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for this financial year to date? How many FOI requests has the Department received for this financial year to date? How many requests have been denied and how many have been granted? Has the department failed to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests? If so, how many and why? Do any of these requests remain outstanding? If so, how many and why?

Answer:

Other than guidelines and other agency resources issued and updated by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, the Department has not received any updated advice on how to respond to FOI requests.

As the information on the costs to the Department for processing FOI requests for the current financial year is collated for the FOI Annual Report issued by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner at the end of each financial year, information relating to this financial year will be available after 31 July 2013.

For the 2012-13 financial year to 10 February 2013 the Department received 7 399 FOI requests (5 672 Access and 1 727 Amendment).

For the 7 306 FOI requests finalised by the department for the 2012-13 financial year to 10 February 2013 (5 547 Access and 1 759 Amendment) the outcomes have been as follows:

Requests for access to documents:

- 2 977 (53.7%) were granted in full;
- 1 969 (35.5%) were granted in part;
- 390 (7.0%) were refused in full; and
- 211 (3.8%) were withdrawn or transferred to another agency.

Requests for amendment to personal information:

- 1 093 (62.1%) records were altered;
- 168 (9.6%) records were annotated; and
- 498 (28.3%) were refused or withdrawn.

For requests due in the 2012-13 financial year to 10 February 2013, the department finalised 86.6% of requests within 30 days.

The Department had a total of 967 cases on hand as at 10 February 2013. Of these, 220 requests were outside of the legislative timeframe (inclusive of extensions of time granted under the FOI Act). This is as a result of the size and/or complexity of these requests.