

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Portfolio

Question No. 104

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 30 May 2013:

Social media

1. Has there been any changes to department and agency social media or protocols about staff access and useage of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since May 2012 Budget Estimates? If yes, please explain and provide copies of any advice that has been issued.
2. Does the department/agency monitor usage of social media?
 - a) If yes, provide details of the useage (for example details could include average hours per employee, hours when useage peaks).
 - b) Has there been a change to the department/agency protocols due to staff useage?
 - c) If no, why not? Will the department/agency monitor usage in the future?
3. Does social media impact on employee productivity? Provide details (details could include increased internet usage in general or increased internet usage in standard business hours)

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

For 2012-13 financial year information up to 31 January 2013, please refer to QoN response 133 from the Additional Estimates round.

For the period 1 February 2013 to 31 May 2013, the following agencies have no change to their previous response:

The Attorney-General's Department, Administrative Appeal Tribunal, Australian Crime Commission, Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, Australian Human Rights Commission, Australian Institute of Criminology, Australian Law Reform Commission, Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, Family Court of Australia, Federal Circuit Court of Australia, Federal Court of Australia, High Court of Australia, Insolvency and Trustee Service Australia, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and the Office of Parliamentary Counsel.

See below for other responses.

Australian Federal Police

1. No changes since the Australian Federal Police's (AFP) answer since May 2012 Senate Estimates.

2. No changes since the Australian Federal Police's (AFP) answer to QoN 124 of October 2012 Senate Estimates.
 - a) The AFP does monitor usage of Social Media as part of the overall monitoring of internet usage. However, monitoring is restricted to the amount of data downloaded. The AFP does not monitor the hours spent on the internet as it is difficult to determine when a user is actually browsing the internet or simply has a web page open but may actually be doing other work.
 - b) See question 1
 - c) There has been no need presented for a change in AFPNet protocols however the procedures currently in place are ongoing
3. AFP policy is to support a philosophy of reasonable private usage of AFP ICT system, provided this does not compromise or detract from the appointee's official duties. There are aspects of the use of social networking that can improve productivity rather than detract from it considering the nature of AFP business. Appointees are also encouraged to work flexibly so reasonable use of social networking during core work hours does not, in itself, demonstrate a loss of productivity.

Australian Government Solicitor

Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) is a government business enterprise operating on a commercial and competitive basis in providing legal and related services to government and its agencies. AGS does not receive any Budget or other appropriations and its employees are engaged outside of the *Public Service Act 1999*. The question is therefore not applicable to AGS.

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation

1. There has been no change to ASIO's social media protocols about staff access and usage of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussion forums and blogs.
2. (a) - (c) for security reasons, it would not be appropriate to publicly comment on this matter.
3. ASIO has not identified any impact on employee productivity from social media usage.

Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC)

1. No changes to protocols about staff access and use. However, the agency has created accounts in AUSTRAC's name on Twitter and Facebook to prevent creation by others. No advice has been issued in relation to any possible future use of those accounts.
2. Yes, within the monitoring parameters defined in agency IT security policy.
 - a) Averages less than one hour per week per employee, with peak usage during lunch hours.
 - b) No.
 - c) Social media use identified through monitoring has been within acceptable parameters. AUSTRAC will continue monitoring in future.
3. No impact has been identified.

CrimTrac

1. There has been no change to the social media protocols. However it should be noted that changes are currently being drafted regarding the Public Service, though these do not change the intent of the policy.
2. CrimTrac monitors usage of all websites. Access attempts to social media sites for all users are logged, regardless if connection is successful or not.
 - a) Details logged include sites accessed and volume downloaded. Time logged on sites is not recorded as monitoring occurs on the gateway, not locally on the end-point.
 - b) No change.
 - c) N/A
3. Social media is not available to general staff, and is only available for staff who have an identified need based on their role in the agency.

National Native Title Tribunal

The National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) will not be providing a response to this question, as from 1 July 2012 the NNTT is no longer a *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* Agency, and is funded to carry out its functions as a sub-program of the Federal Court of Australia's appropriation. On 12 March 2013 the *Courts and Tribunals Legislation Amendment (Administration) Act 2013* came into operation. On that day the Australian Public Service Commissioner signed a determination which transferred all staff employed by the Tribunal to the Federal Court of Australia under s.72 of the *Public Service Act 1999*, but those staff are designated staff assisting the Tribunal under the *Native Title Act 1993*.