

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
FEDERAL COURT OF AUSTRALIA

Question No. 67

Senator Abetz asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2010:

Hobart Federal Court Registry:

- a. How many staff were employed in the Federal Court Registrar and based in Hobart each year since the inception of that office in Hobart (as records allow)? How many staff resigned each year who were employed by the Federal Court Registrar and based in Hobart?
- b. How many staff were employed by the Federal Court Registrar in Hobart in 2006/2007? How many of those staff were based in Hobart?
- c. How many staff were employed by the Federal Court Registrar in Hobart each financial year including and since 06/07 to date? Please include in the detail of each financial year how many staff were based in Hobart. And also, how many staff resigned each year.
- d. Is it a fact that out of six staff employed by the FCR in Hobart that only one remains employed? What are the conditions of the remaining employee's/s' employment? Are these employees out-sourced and/or not based in Hobart?
- e. Is there an explanation for the rapid decrease in staffing levels?
- f. Please list the reasons for resignations of staff over the last two financial years. It has been reported that there is a distinct change of culture within the organisation – if so, could you please explain?

The answers to the honourable senator's question are as follows:

- a. The number of staff employed in the Court's Tasmania Registry since 30 June 1992 (earlier records are not readily available) is outlined in the table below. The source of these figures is the relevant Court Annual Report.

Data on resignations from the Tasmanian registry is only available from 2003. There has only been one resignation which was in 2009.

Year	Number of Federal Court Staff based in Hobart
1992	4
1993	5
1994	6
1995	10
1996	9
1997	10
1998	7

1999	7
2000	6
2001	6
2002	8
2003	8
2004	8
2005	8* (7 Tasmania Registry staff, 1 Principal Registry)
2006	10 (9 Tasmania Registry staff, 1 Principal Registry)
2007	10 (9 Tasmania Registry staff, 1 Principal Registry)
2008	10 (9 Tasmania Registry staff, 1 Principal Registry)
2009	8 (7 Tasmania Registry staff, 1 Principal Registry)
2010	6 (5 Tasmania Registry staff, 1 Principal Registry)

* From July 2004 a long-standing Federal Court employee based in Hobart has undertaken work for the Court's Principal Registry (national office) while remaining physically located in Hobart.

- b. In 2006-07, nine staff were employed in the Court's Tasmania Registry. All of the staff were based in Hobart.
- c. Staffing figures since 2006-07 are provided above in response to question a. All of these staff were based in Hobart. There was only one resignation during this period in 2009.
- d. There are two staff currently based in Hobart who have worked with the Court for a considerable period. One undertakes a national role and is therefore not reflected in local staffing numbers and the other undertakes a library role. There are also four staff in the registry who have commenced in the past 12 months. The employment conditions of all staff in the Tasmania registry are contained in the Court's Enterprise Agreement and are no different to those conditions applying in other registries. There are no contractors in the Tasmania registry, none of the staff are 'outsourced' and they are all based in Hobart.
- e. The staffing levels in the Tasmania registry reflect the decrease in the Court's workload, including the work undertaken by staff for the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) and the structure and resources that are required to undertake the work of the Court.
- f. As noted above at question c, there has only been one resignation since July 2006 which was the result of the staff member accepting a position in another agency. In the past two financial years there has also been four voluntary redundancies, one involuntary redundancy/retirement and one transfer to another APS agency.

Yes there has been a change, resulting from an increase in the classification of Client Service Officer positions which was intended to deliver better services. Our feedback from court users is that the service provided is very good and this may be a reflection of a changed culture.