

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 3

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: Fraud investigations

Proof Hansard page: 11/12

Senator MILNE asked:

Senator MILNE: I just want to follow up on the issue of the fraud investigations. The allegation is that hundreds of fraud investigations were conducted inside the department during the past two years. Can you tell me how many fraud investigations were conducted in the department in the past two years?

Mr Withers: In 2010-11 the department received 23 allegations of fraud against departmental employees. In the 2011-12 year to date there have been three allegations of fraud against departmental employees.

Senator MILNE: And what about 2009-10?

Mr Withers: I do not have those figures, I am sorry.

Senator MILNE: Then I will put that on notice, please. Going to the 23 allegations in 2010-11 and the three in 2011-12, can you break those up in terms of departments, as opposed to generic things like travel and credit cards? What about issues like procurement? Among the areas of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, how many relate to each of those departments?

Mr Withers: In 2010-11, six of those 23 matters proceeded to investigation., and all six matters were dismissed. There was no finding of fraud.

Senator MILNE: But which departments were they?

Mr Withers: They were all in this department.

Dr O'Connell: Perhaps Mr Withers has misunderstood. Senator Milne, you are asking for a split by parts of the department. Is that correct?

Senator MILNE: Yes, that is right. I am trying to understand the allegations in relation to forestry, agriculture or fisheries—within the department—pertaining to those fraud inquiries.

Dr O'Connell: We would have to take that on notice. I doubt that we have that break-up. Naturally we are a department, not three departments.

Senator MILNE: I understand there are generic issues like credit card use or whatever. When you come to procurement surely it would come down to specific departments.

Dr O'Connell: It would come down to specific areas, but we could take that on notice for you. I do not think that we would have that there, because it does not naturally break up like that. We would have to look at it.

Answer:

In 2009–10 the department received 20 allegations of fraud against departmental employees. A breakdown of allegations of fraud against departmental employees by division is tabulated below for 2009–10, 2010–10 and 2011–12 year to date as at 30 September 2011.

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Question: 3 (continued)

Division	Number of allegations by financial year		
	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12
Sustainable Resource Management	1	2	0
Climate Change	0	0	0
Corporate Policy	1	0	0
Corporate Finance	1	1	0
Corporate Services	1	0	0
Biosecurity Animal	0	4	0
Biosecurity Plant	2	2	2
Biosecurity Food	5	1	1
Biosecurity Quarantine Operations	4	3	0
Biosecurity Regional and Business Services	2	4	0
Biosecurity Strategic Projects	1	0	0
Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences	0	1	0
Agricultural Productivity	0	0	0
Trade and Market Access	1	1	0
Unknown	1	4	0

Total	20	23	3
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Allegation by type	Allegations Received 2009–10	Allegations Received 2010–11	Allegations Received 2011–12	Allegations Proven
Misuse credit card	12	17	2	0
Misuse of Commonwealth information	1	3	1	0
Falsely claim entitlements	1	2	0	0
Corruption	1	1	0	0
Produce false document	1	0	0	0*
Theft	1	0	0	0
Conflict of interest	3	0	0	0
Total	20	23	3	0

*The produce false document allegation is currently under investigation by the Australian Federal Police.

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Question: 5

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: Legal services

Proof Hansard Page: 16

Senator COLBECK asked:

Mr Withers: The move earlier this year to AGS as our legal services provider was on the basis of an open approach to the market, in which the fee structure was just one element of the procurement decision.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Could you tell me the blended hourly rate for Blake Dawson compared to the AGS? You might need that on notice.

Mr Withers: I will take it on notice.

Answer:

The question seeks information which is commercial-in-confidence in that its disclosure would prejudice the commercial interests of one or both of the legal services providers and therefore it is not able to be publicly disclosed.

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Question: 11

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: Fraud investigations

Proof Hansard page: 18

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN: But I want to know what Blake Dawson's thinking is. We are entitled to know that. I also confirm that I have put on notice that you will provide us with all details of all leases—including the rate per square metre, the title details, the owners and their ACNs—for all the properties you lease. The last thing I want to put on notice is: how many people have been disciplined or sacked in the last three years due to fraud, misappropriation or misinterpretation of procurement issues? How many have been investigated?

Dr O'Connell: I can answer the first part of that now: none.

Senator HEFFERNAN: How many have been investigated? You can take that on notice.

Answer:

In response to the question regarding the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF's) leases, a summary of all leased properties including the rate per square metre, the title details, the owners and their Australian Company Numbers has been provided as part of the response to Question 1 from the Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing in October 2011.

In response to the question regarding fraud, misappropriation or misinterpretation of procurement issues, in the last three financial years the following number of employees have been investigated by DAFF for fraud:

- 2009–10: 23 employees
- 2010–11: 24 employees
- 2011–12 (year to date as at 30 September 2011): three employees

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Question: 39

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division
Topic: Interim Inspector General of Biosecurity
Proof Hansard page: 80

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN: What inspector-general audits have you carried out thus far?

Dr Dunn: In this current role?

Senator HEFFERNAN: In the last two years.

Dr Dunn: I have submitted 10 audit reports.

Senator HEFFERNAN: Could you table them to this committee.

Dr Dunn: Yes, that can be done.

Senator HEFFERNAN: Okay. Roughly, what did they cover?

Dr Dunn: They were some continuing audits in relation to equine importation, an audit in relation to the procedures for the importation of plant nursery stock and an audit of the management of quarantine waste generated from international vessels at sea ports around Australia.

Senator HEFFERNAN: What about the myrtle rust thing? Are you trying to get into that?

Dr Dunn: I have not done anything on myrtle rust to date. That is subject to future considerations.

Senator HEFFERNAN: Did you have a look into the background of the importation of dirt, which I understand is—through the good work of the officers of the department—going back to China? Did you have a look at that?

Dr Dunn: That is on our work schedule for this year.

Senator HEFFERNAN: Are your reports available publicly as outlined by the Beale review?

Dr Dunn: Yes. As I said at the outset, reports go initially to the minister. Once the minister has dealt with those reports, they are posted on the web page for the interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity Australia, which is on the DAFF web site under publications.

Senator HEFFERNAN: Have you done the Asian bee or New Zealand apples?

Dr Dunn: I will provide a list of those audits that have been done

Answer:

The Interim Inspector General of Biosecurity (IIGB) has provided the following audit reports to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for the years 2009–10 and 2010–11. The audit reports are available on the department's website at www.daff.gov.au/about/publications/interim-inspector-general-of-biosecurity

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Question: 39 (continued)

- An examination of what caused a consignment of imported raw peeled prawns that tested positive for White Spot Syndrome Virus (WSSV) to be mistakenly released into Australia by the Biosecurity Services Group (BSG), November 2010.
- An examination of the likelihood of imported raw peeled prawns that tested positive for White Spot Syndrome Virus (WSSV) and were mistakenly released into Australia by the Biosecurity Services Group (BSG) entering high risk pathways and of then causing WSSV to establish in Australia, November 2010.
- Pre-export procedures for horses from Japan, June 2011.
- An examination of the performance of the systems that the biosecurity divisions of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has in place to detect and mitigate biosecurity risks before they get to Australia's border, importation of plant nursery stock, July 2011.
- An examination of the performance of the systems that the biosecurity divisions of DAFF has in place to manage biosecurity risks along entry pathways, citrus canker, July 2011.
- Import Health Certification for Horses Imported to Australia, November 2009.
- Quarantine surveillance following post-arrival quarantine for specified horses after importation to Australia, May 2010.
- Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN), June 2010.
- Assessment of the Biosecurity Services Group internal audit of Sandown Post-arrival Quarantine Facility, June 2010.
- Management of quarantine waste from international vessels at Australian seaports, June 2010.
- Equine Pre-export Procedures in Singapore, July 2010.

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Question: 136

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: Staffing

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Provide details of where Ministerial personal staff and DLOs are based.
2. For the year 2010-11, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of the employment period?
3. For the year YTD, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

Answer:

1. Please see response in table below:

	Brisbane	Canberra
No of ministerial staff	5	8
No of DLOs	-	2

2. During 2010–11, the department engaged 392 non-ongoing (contract) employees with an average employment period of approximately five and a half months.
3. From 1 July 2011 to 1 November 2011, the department engaged 348 non-ongoing (contract) employees with an average employment period of approximately four months.

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Question: 146

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: Communication devices

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Provide details of the departmental policy regarding provision of mobile phones, iPads and Blackberrys.
2. Provide details of the policy regarding provision of mobile phones, iPads and Blackberrys to Ministerial staff and Department Liaison Officers.
3. In March 2011 the department had 1875 mobile phones, by 17 June 2011 this number had decreased to 1350. Has there been a similar reduction in the mobile phone bill? Please provide comparative data.
4. What are the numbers of iPads and Blackberry devices (or equivalent) over the same time period?

Answer:

1. Departmental officers are issued with a mobile telephone or Blackberry if their duties require them to be contactable when they are away from their place of work in accordance with the department's Telecommunications Equipment Entitlement and Usage Policy and Procedures. This policy is presently being updated to include the provision of iPads.
2. Ministers' entitlements for telecommunications equipment are outlined in the Ministers of State Entitlements 2011 handbook issued by the Department of Finance and Deregulation which can be found at www.maps.finance.gov.au/entitlements_handbooks/index.html. Departmental Liaison Officers are issued with a Blackberry, iPad or mobile phone in accordance with the department's Telecommunications Equipment Entitlement and Usage Policy and Procedures.
3. The figures provided for June 2011 have been found to be in error and have been updated below to 30 September 2011:

	March 2011	Sept 2011	Increase
Mobile Telephones	1612	1666	54
Blackberrys	263	442	179
Total	1875	2108	233

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Question: 146 (continued)

The department commenced consolidating its mobile telephony and data accounts in April 2011 in order to transfer to the whole-of-government Telecommunications Commodities, Carriage and Associated Services Panel. The department relies on data provided by the various service providers to compile the number of devices provided in these responses. The number of devices provided in the June response was subject to the account consolidation activity and appears to have omitted some accounts thought at the time to be included in the consolidation.

Although the department continues to consolidate mobile telephony and data accounts, the overall service numbers are increasing due to an increasing requirement for staff to be contactable out of normal operating hours. Device and call costs are decreasing through leveraging new whole-of-government panel arrangements.

4.

	March 2011	June 2011	Increase
iPads	4	4	0
Blackberry	263	391	128

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Question: 148

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: Graduate program

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. What obligation does the Department have to offer ongoing employment to graduates participating in this program?
2. The Graduate Development Program includes 5 days in industry. What are the expected outcomes of this component of the Development Program?
3. What assessment has been undertaken to determine if the industry placement is achieving these outcomes?
4. What are the selection criteria for graduates participating in this program?
5. What consideration is given to industry experience in the selection process?
6. The retention rates for the program are around 46% after 3 years. How many of the graduates that didn't continue were let go by the department?
7. How do the retention rates compare to other similar graduate programs?
8. The department does not have any KPIs for the graduate recruitment or Graduate Development Program, without this how is the success or otherwise of the program measured?
9. What feedback has been provided by participants, including those who have not continued with the department?

Answer:

1. Graduates are engaged as ongoing employees at an APS3 level upon commencement of the Graduate Development Program. In accordance with the department's Collective Agreement 2009–11, clause 2.14.1, "upon successful completion of a course of training under the Department's Graduate Development Program, Graduates will be advanced to APS 4 level within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) Graduate Broadband."
2. The expected outcomes of the major project/industry visit are to provide:
 - the department with fresh ideas to address cross-industry issues that affect the department's operations, effectiveness or policy
 - graduates with experience in project management and team leadership
 - skills in working co-operatively across teams
 - increased awareness of the breadth of departmental activity
 - increased awareness of industry issues through direct contact with DAFF stakeholders.

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Question: 148 (continued)

3. Graduates provide feedback on the major project/industry visit through the formal program evaluation. Each project topic is assigned a Senior Executive as 'Project Sponsor' and an Executive Level manager as 'Project Advisor'. Additionally, a 'Stakeholder Advisor' with extensive stakeholder experience attends the industry visit component. Project Sponsors, Advisors and Stakeholder Advisors also contribute to the Graduate Program evaluation.
4. The selection criteria for the Graduate Development Program are:
 - shapes strategic thinking
 - achieves results
 - cultivates productive working relationships
 - exemplifies personal drive and integrity
 - motivation to work for DAFFAs all graduates participate in the industry visits, there are no further specific criteria for this aspect of the program.
5. Applicants are asked to give details of up to three employers on their application form. The program is a developmental program and so applicants are not expected or required to have extensive industry experience. However relevant industry experience can demonstrate motivation to work in the department. It can also be used to demonstrate relevant examples against the other criteria and would be viewed favourably.
6. No graduates were terminated by the department between 2005 and 2011. Graduates leave the department to further their careers in other APS departments or in the private sector.
7. The department does not hold retention data for other graduate programs.
8. The department evaluates the success of the recruitment process and program in a number of ways:
 - analysis of a wide range of metrics surrounding the recruitment process
 - feedback is also obtained from panel members, service providers and applicants to contribute to continuous improvement
 - graduates meet individually with the program coordinator on two to three occasions during the year and graduate supervisors are provided with the opportunity to discuss the program with the program coordinator at any point during the program.

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Question: 148 (continued)

9. Feedback has been provided by graduates (both past and present) around:
- satisfaction with the Graduate Development Program, including
 - quality and amount of work
 - quality of supervision
 - training and development opportunities
 - satisfaction with their current job
 - satisfaction with the department as an employer
 - tenure
 - important workplace attributes impacting on satisfaction with job
 - mentoring
 - future intentions.

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Question: 149

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: Staff movements

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Of the 31 redundancies for BSG reported in February 2011, for which the average severance payout per person was \$118,000 (QON 233 May 2011), how many are now employed in essentially the same role in industry?
2. QON 233 May 2011 requested specific information regarding the funding budgeted for redundancies related to BSG (QON 233). The response provided stated “some ECRP funding has been retained to enable the full implementation of the Australian Export Meat Inspection System”. How much money has been retained?
3. How much money has been budgeted in forward estimates?
4. What was the turnover of permanent staff (%) for 2010-2011?

Answer:

1. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) does not keep records for employees once they have left DAFF.
2. The carryover for the Australian Export Meat Inspection System from the Export Certification Reform Package was of \$10.523 million.
3. None.
4. Based on separation data from DAFF as at 30 June 2011 and average monthly headcount, ongoing employees separated from DAFF at a rate of 8.7 per cent with 415 separations throughout the financial year.

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Question: 150

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: Workplace compensation

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

The Department has provided information indicating that the Central East Region, South West Region and South East Region Biosecurity Services have had the most incidents reported involving workplace injuries (QON 236, May 2011).

1. What analysis has been undertaken of why these regions have the most reported incidents of workplace injuries?
2. What are the nature of the injuries?
3. What investigations have taken place?
4. What is the % injury to number of employees?
5. Is this higher than the average?
6. Is this higher than accepted levels?
7. Provide details of the range and average times of compensation payment.

Answer:

1. The concentration of reported incidents of workplace injuries in the Central East, South West and South East Regions is a due to the fact that almost three quarters of the department's operational front line staff (71.7 per cent) are located in those regions.
2. The nature of recorded injuries are: (shown in per cent)

• Hitting object with part of body	19.7
• Body stressing	19.0
• Hit by moving objects	17.7
• Slips, trips and falls	13.2
• Chemicals and other substances	6.2
• Heat, electricity and other factors	2.3
• Biological factors	1.1
• Mental stress	3.1
• Unspecified	17.6
3. One investigation has taken place; a Comcare Compliance Monitoring Activity for alleged Methyl Bromide exposure.
4. In 2010–11, 4.5 per cent of department staff reported injury.

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Question: 150 (continued)

5. No; in 2009–10, injuries reported totalled 8 per cent of the department's workforce. The average over 2009–10 to 2010-11 is 6.25 per cent.
6. Incidents have decreased in line with the National Occupational Health and Safety Strategy.
7. From 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 there were 117 compensation claims. The range of time was 0 to 156 weeks. The average length of incapacity was 5.44 weeks.

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Question: 151

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: Recruitment

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Information has been provided regarding external recruitments costs for Adcorp, Australian Federal Police (AFP), Medibank and the Gazette (QON 239 May 2011). Why is DAFF “only able to report on” these external expenditures?
2. What services do these organisations provide?
3. What is the per head external recruitment cost for the last three financial years?

Answer:

1. The identified external expenditures (Adcorp, AFP, Medibank and Gazette) are able to be quantified through departmental reporting systems. Other costs associated with external recruitment such as scribing and placement fees cannot be individually identified or accurately reported on.
2. The services provided are:
 - Adcorp – is the central media advertising agency that must be used for all recruitment/non campaign advertising
 - AFP – provides pre-employment police checks
 - Medibank – provides pre-employment medical checks
 - Gazette – the Public Service Gazette is utilised to advertise all ongoing roles for the Australian Public Service.
3. As noted in the answer to Q1 departmental systems do not enable this calculation to be made.

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Question: 173

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: AQIS and costs

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Is it correct that AQIS is considering a new name?
2. Given AQIS's push for full cost recovery, how would the costs associated with such a change be funded and justified?

Answer:

1. Yes. The move to a new name reflects the biosecurity reform approach of shifting the focus away from quarantine at the border only to biosecurity across the continuum – offshore, at the border and onshore.
2. The department has decided on a staged approach to implementing the biosecurity reform in line with operational, business and budgetary requirements. The implementation will be incremental and will be part of business as usual.

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Question: 214

Division/Agency: CSD – Corporate Services Division

Topic: Industrial action by AQIS inspectors

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

I refer to recent industrial action by AQIS inspectors in Australian export abattoirs like V&V Walsh in Bunbury, Western Australia and the negative impact this is having on throughput, business viability, and the incomes of workers.

1. What action has the Department/Minister taken to resolve the dispute?
2. What impact does the Department/Minister consider this industrial action is having on abattoir management, abattoir economics, and workers income?

Answer:

1. The industrial action taken by the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) members in the department was taken after a proposed Enterprise Agreement put to a ballot of employees did not receive support from a majority of employees.

The department resumed negotiations with the CPSU and employee bargaining representatives. All parties have now reached in principle agreement and a new proposed Enterprise Agreement is being made available for employees to consider before being put to a ballot in early December. The department does not anticipate any further industrial action.

2. The department is unable to comment on the impact of the protected industrial action on abattoir management, abattoir economics and worker incomes. There was no protected industrial action taken by AQIS inspectors at V&V Walsh in Bunbury, Western Australia during the CPSU stoppages.