

**Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009  
**Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government**

**Question No.:** CORP 01

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Planned Staff Numbers

**Hansard Pages:** 6 - 7 (24/02/09)

**Senator Bernardi asked:**

**Senator BERNARDI**—.....Have staff numbers been reduced as a result of the efficiency dividend or any other budget changes?

**Mr Taylor**—Yes. I will get David to reflect on the precise numbers.

**Mr Banham**—Our staffing number as of 31 December was 1,249. That is actually an increase since the last hearing. We have had some increases in some measures outside of the regional offices. The total number of staff from regional offices, which we reduced, is around 32.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Let me just clarify that: the total number of staff in regional offices has been reduced by 32; is that correct?

**Mr Banham**—As of 31 December it is 21 that we have reduced in the regional offices.

**Senator BERNARDI**—So 21 as at 31 December, yet overall staff levels have been increased to 1,249.

**Mr Banham**—That is correct.

**Senator BERNARDI**—That is an increase of how many?

**Mr Banham**—Thirty-two.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Where have those increases of 32 staff occurred?

**Mr Banham**—Eighteen of them were in the Office of the Infrastructure Coordinator, which is Infrastructure Australia, established last year. Fifteen were in Infrastructure investment and 13 were in the Office of Transport Security.

**Senator BERNARDI**—That is more than 32.

**Mr Banham**—It is the net of the 21.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Net of the 21; okay. Are you able to tell me what level these positions are?

**Mr Banham**—The additions?

**Senator BERNARDI**—Yes.

**Mr Banham**—No. I would need to take that on notice.

**Senator BERNARDI**—If you wouldn't mind, that would be terrific; thank you.—....

**Answer:**

These positions were across a range of public service levels.

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**Question No.:** CORP 02

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Planned Graduate Recruitment and Cadetships

**Hansard Page:** 7 (24/02/09)

**Senator Bernardi asked:**

**Senator BERNARDI**—Do you have a formal process for planned graduate recruitment or identification of potential additional staff?

**Mr Banham**—For recruitment of graduates?

**Senator BERNARDI**—Yes.

**Mr Banham**—Yes. We have a formal graduate recruitment program every year.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Just briefly, how does that operate?

**Mr Banham**—I will need to get the full details to you.

**Senator BERNARDI**—That would be fine, and can you include other similar programs, whether they are related to cadetships or interns, or however you might like to describe them, not just graduate recruitment.

**Answer:**

### **Planned Graduate Recruitment**

Each year, the Department identifies suitable graduate opportunities in a range of academic disciplines across each of the business divisions and conducts a targeted marketing campaign using career fairs at all major university across the country and promotions in the national press, Internet and university publications.

Applicants complete an online application addressing selection criteria and a short literacy and numeracy assessment is undertaken. Short-listed applicants participate in assessment centres conducted by senior departmental officers in each major capital city. A further short list is prepared and offers made to suitable applicants.

### **Cadetships/Interns/Trainees**

The Department participates in the National Indigenous Cadetship Project which is run by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Candidates are registered on the National Indigenous Cadetship Project database and each year, successful cadets undertake 12 weeks of work placement, normally during university breaks.

The Department participates in the Indigenous Entry Level Recruitment Program coordinated by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC). The program is an 18-month career development program. If short listed, applicants will be invited to attend an assessment centre in either Canberra or their home capital city.

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The Department participates in Indigenous Graduate Recruitment coordinated by the APSC. Applicants complete the Graduate Application Form, and if short-listed will attend an assessment centre in Canberra.

The Department currently offers a vacation cadetship program in the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics Division. Advertising is conducted through Career Hub which is the job board for 25 Australian universities with applications submitted on eRecruit.

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**Question No.:** CORP 03

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Staff Turnover Rates

**Hansard Pages:** 7 - 8 (24/02/09)

**Senator Bernardi asked:**

**Senator BERNARDI**—I would presume that you retain records about your retention and turnover rates of staff.

**Mr Banham**—Yes; we do.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Do you have those records available or are you able to recollect them off the top of your head?

**Mr Banham**—No. I would need to take that on notice, but we should be able to get back to you today.

**Senator BERNARDI**—That would be good. Specifically, I am interested in the relative ratio of turnover or staff retention over the last three or four years.

**Mr Banham**—We will be able to get that.

**Senator BERNARDI**—If you can do that, that would be terrific. Whilst there have been some additions in staffing, has there been any change in consultancy expenditure since we last met? I am not sure whether questions were asked in this regard at the last estimates.

**Answer:**

Separation rates for the Department have averaged around 20 per cent for the last three years.

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**Question No.:** CORP 04

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services  
**Topic:** Replacement of Capital Items  
**Hansard Page:** 9 (24/02/09)

**Senator Bernardi asked:**

**Senator BERNARDI**—Did the agency receive any depreciation funding for recurrent expenditure in the last financial year?

**Mr Wood**—The department received depreciation funding. That is disclosed in our portfolio additional estimates statements for our revised budget for 2008-09. Forecast depreciation expenditure is about \$13.9 million.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Has any depreciation funding been used for purposes other than the replacement of capital items in 2007-08?

**Mr Wood**—No.

**Senator BERNARDI**—So how much has the department spent on the replacement of capital items in the first six months of this financial year?

**Mr Wood**—I will take that on notice.

**Answer:**

This information can be found in the Department's Annual Report.

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**Question No.:** CORP 05

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Program Underspends in the 2009-2010 Financial Year

**Hansard Page:** 9 (24/02/09)

**Senator Bernardi asked:**

**Senator BERNARDI**—Are you able to provide me with a list of programs that are currently tracking for an underspend in this financial year?

**Mr Wood**—We could provide that. We recently updated our budget estimates in the 2008-09 portfolio additional estimates statements. We did have a reduction in our estimate for a couple of programs.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Can you tell me what those programs are?

**Mr Wood**—They are disclosed in our portfolio additional estimates statements.

**Senator BERNARDI**—I do not have that.

**Mr Wood**—Sorry, if it would help, we could provide a table to you later.

**Senator BERNARDI**—That would be great. If you could provide a table, that would be terrific. Thank you. —.....

**Answer:**

Information on program underspends is available in the Department's Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.

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**Question No.:** CORP 06

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Staff Employed on Media-Related Duties

**Hansard Page:** 10 (24/02/09)

**Senator Bernardi asked:**

**Senator BERNARDI**—But we are getting diverted. With \$500,799, could you tell me how many staff are actually employed within the media-monitoring section of the Department—or on media related duties, I should say?

**Mr Banham**—In going to media monitoring, it is a fully contracted service. Our staff may work on the periphery to help with the distribution, but it would not be material and we would not record that level.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Okay. What about media related duties within the department?

**Mr Banham**—Staffing numbers? I will need to get back to you on those.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Okay, that would be great. Thank you. —....

**Answer:**

The Department has a Communication Services Branch which undertakes a range of duties, some of which are media-related.

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**Question No.:** CORP 07

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services  
**Topic:** Department's Hospitality Spend  
**Hansard Page:** 10 (24/02/09)

**Senator Bernardi asked:**

**Senator BERNARDI**—...What about hospitality? What was the Department's hospitality spend in 2008 and also the financial year to date?

**Mr Banham**—For the 2007-08 FBT year, it was \$109,692.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Do you have details for the financial year to date?

**Mr Banham**—No, we do not.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Would you be able to provide those?

**Mr Banham**—We can get them on notice.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Equally, I would be interested in the date, location and purpose of the hospitality expenditure. I am happy to put these questions on notice as well, just to clarify it for you.—.

**Answer:**

This information is provided in the Department's Annual Report.



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**Question No.:** CORP 08

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Department's Spend on Community Meetings

**Hansard Page:** 12 (24/02/09)

**Senator McGauran asked:**

**Senator McGAURAN**—.....What is the expense of, say, the Department, or the Minister's travel expenses for these community meetings?

**Senator Conroy**—All of that information is publicly available via, I think, PM&C estimates, Senator McGauran. I think it is regularly asked for and regularly provided. We are happy to take it on notice but I am not sure that we would have that information readily at hand. Quite genuinely, I think Senator Faulkner provides that information for the total cost across the whole of government through the PM&C estimates. I am sure if you raced around there you could even get the information out of him today—if it is on.

**Senator McGAURAN**—Thank you, Minister, and I would ask that you specifically provide the department's cost for travel expenses.

**Mr Taylor**—I am happy to take that on notice, but David Banham will probably provide a reasonable outline of where we currently sit.

**Mr Banham**—Since the last hearing, there have been meetings in Launceston, Corio and Campbelltown. The Department's cost for Launceston was \$1,953. For Corio it was \$1,064 and for the recent meeting at Campbelltown it was \$1,063.

**Senator McGAURAN**—For the Minister?

**Mr Banham**—No, those are departmental costs.

**Answer:**

Mr Banham has already provided the answer at the hearing [Hansard page 12].

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**Question No.:** CORP 09

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Reviews

**Hansard Page:** Written Question

**Senator McGauran asked:**

1. How many Reviews are currently being undertaken in the portfolio/agency or affecting the portfolio agency?
  2. When will each of these reviews be concluded?
  3. Which Reviews have been completed since Supplementary Budget Estimates 2008?
  4. When will the Government be responding to the respective reviews that have been completed?
  5. What is the total number of Reviews both completed and ongoing in the portfolio/agency or affecting the portfolio agency since November 2007?
  6. What is the estimated cost of these Reviews?
- What further reviews are planned for 2009?

**Answer:**

A response to this question will be provided in conjunction with the response to PQoN 954.

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**Question No.:** CORP 10

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Consultancies

**Hansard Page:** Written Question

**Senator McGauran asked:**

1. How many consultancies have been undertaken or are underway since November 2007?
2. Please identify the name of the consultant, the subject matter of the consultancy, the duration and cost of the consultancy, and the method of procurement (ie. open tender, direct source, etc).
3. Please also include total value for all consultancies.
4. Do you stand by Government Tenders website ([www.tenders.gov.au](http://www.tenders.gov.au)) and what changes or corrections have been made to it since 18 February 2009? Are you up to date with reporting requirements?
5. How many consultancies are planned and/or budgeted for this calendar year?
6. Have these been published in your Annual Procurement Plan (APP) on the AusTender website and if not why not?
7. In each case please identify the subject matter, duration, cost and method of procurement as above, and the name of the consultant if known.

**Answer:**

- 1-7 This information is available on the AusTender website. Data is uploaded to AusTender weekly.

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**Question No. CORP 11**

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Number of SES Employees as at 24 November 2007 and 26 February 2009

**Hansard Page:** Written Question

**Senator Humphries asked:**

How many SES positions were there in this Department as at?:

- 24 November 2007
- 26 February 2009

**Answer:**

On 24 November 2007 there were 43 SES positions in this Department.

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**Question No. CORP 12**

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** 2020 Summit – Federal and State Regulations

**Hansard Page:** Written Question

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

The 2020 Summit cited as a matter of concern contradictory Federal and State regulations. In fact, on page 41 of the Final Summit Report, the Federalism sub-group recommended the establishment of a nationally-consistent set of regulations. Similarly, the sub-groups looking at the role of government recommended, on page 43 of the Report, clause 2.8 suggested the need for *Harmonisation of federal and state regulation to reduce duplication and reduce costs of doing business*.

When will the Government provide a response to this recommendation of the Final Summit Report, along with all the other recommendations, given that has not met its pledge to provide a response in the New Year?

**Answer:**

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, as the lead agency for the 2020 Summit, has tabled on 9 April 2009, the attached response to PM41a—j Senate Estimates Question on Notice which is relevant to CORP 12.

**[CORP 12 – Attachment A]**