

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14, 20 November 2013

Question: E13-052

OUTCOME: 0 - Whole of Portfolio

Topic: Public Service Efficiencies

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Ludwig

Question:

- a) Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- b) Has there been a reduction in the use of external consultants and contractors? Has this impacted on the Department/agency, and how? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- c) Provide an update of moving recruitment advertising online. Is any recruitment still in printed materials, and if yes, why? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- d) Has the department/agency reduced its printing costs? If no, why not? Have printing costs increased, and if yes why and how much?
- e) Has the five per cent savings target been achieved? If yes, how, or if it will not, why not? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Answer:

- a) Yes there has been a reduction in business flights expense in the core Department of Health of 27 per cent in 2012-13 financial year compared to 2010-11. The Department does not specifically budget in the forward estimates by business flights.
- b) The Department's expenditure in 2012-13 on consultants and contractors increased by 23 per cent compared to the prior year. The level of annual expenditure on external consultants and contractors is consistent with the Department's budget constraints; government deliverables and need for the expertise and skills this class of resource brings to a number of reform programs, including IT based initiatives. These reform activities included the Age Care Gateway and Hearing Services Online projects.

The Department's use of non-ongoing employees is reducing; there being a 14 per cent reduction over the course of the 2012-13 financial year.

- c) From 1 July 2012, the Department has complied with the Department of Finance Non-Campaign Recruitment Advertising Policy which mandates the use of online recruitment advertising and restricts the use of advertising in major daily newspapers. In line with the policy, vacancies will be advertised online, except for positions which are hard to fill. The amount spent on Recruitment Advertising in the core Department in 2012-13 was \$79, 968 which is down 82 per cent from 2010-11.

The Department does not specifically budget in the forward estimates by this class of expenditure.

- d) Yes, the Department has reduced printing costs by 37 per cent in 2012-13 compared to 2010-11.
- e) Yes. The Department manages resources consistent with the level of funding provided by Government. The Department's business planning processes incorporates all the government efficiency measures allowing the Department to plan for such resources over the forward estimates. The Department does not hypothecate individual efficiency initiatives to specific savings measures.