

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Additional Estimates

13 – 14 February 2013

**Question: AET 307**

**Topic: Making the Public Service More Efficient**

**Written: Received from Committee – 22 February 2013**

**Senator BUSHBY asked:**

307. Please provide an update of the savings achieved through pursuing further efficiencies in the way the public service operates (see media release by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Special Minister of State of 25 September 2012 at: [http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2012/mr\\_1982012.html](http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2012/mr_1982012.html)).

In addition, please provide the following details:

- a. Can you quantify the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates for reductions in air travel?
- b. Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- c. 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?
- d. 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?
- e. Has the Department/Agency reduced its printing costs? If no, why not? Have printing costs increased, and if yes why and by how much? Has the five per cent savings target been achieved – if yes, how, and if no, why not? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

**Answer:**

307.

ASIC continues to primarily pursue and secure efficiencies in the current budget year and over the forward estimates through review of its goods and services expenditure. Specifically, savings are arising from the sub-leasing of surplus office space and leveraging WoAG arrangements around telecommunications, accommodation and air travel. In addition, short term absorption of demand driven client activity in ASIC call centres and registry teams has been met by judiciously managing ASIC-wide discretionary expenditures.

- a. ASIC does not specifically target travel related savings over the forward estimates. Rather, business unit budgets are reduced in order to realise required ASIC wide savings, leaving senior executive leaders the scope to align expenditure with their priorities through business plans.
- b. ASIC manages its business travel policy in line with WoAG procurement rules and with reference to specific conditions associated with certain staff members'

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employment terms. As for question 307 a, ASIC does not specifically target business travel related savings over the forward estimates.

- c. Yes. The ICT contractor target for 31 December 2012 was 31; the actual number of ICT contractors by 31 December 2012 was 21. External consultants are generally used, as required, to provide specialist skills not available in ASIC, or when large new programs (both government mandated and internally generated) are to be delivered. Associated costs are dependent upon the identification and timing of future programs and therefore consultancy related savings are not specifically targeted over the forward estimates.
- d. ASIC recruitment advertising is largely already online. ASIC only advertises in print/press for SES or equivalent positions, indigenous placements or for appointments within ASIC's regional offices as per the APSC guidelines. Savings are not specifically targeted over the forward estimates.
- e. For the 2012/13 financial year, ASIC's total printing costs are expected to reduce by approximately 10% compared to 2011/12. ASIC encourages customers and consumers to use our online services; however, a very small subset of publications continue to be printed for those without access to online services, such as some retirees, the indigenous community and those in remote areas. ASIC does not specifically target printing related savings over the forward estimates.