

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012

18 October 2012

Question: SBT 1783

Topic: Media Staff (ATO)

Written: Received from Committee – 26 October 2012

Senator BUSHBY asked:

1783. For all departments and agencies, please provide – in relation to all public relations, communications and media staff – the following:

- a. By Department or agency:
 - i. How many ongoing staff, the classification, the type of work they undertake and their location.
 - ii. How many non-ongoing staff, their classification, type of work they undertake and their location
 - iii. How many contractors, their classification, type of work they undertake and their location

Answer:

AUSTRALIAN TAXATION OFFICE

	Number of Staff	Classification	Location
(i) Ongoing Staff	11.67	1xAPS5, 4.82xAPS6, 4.87xEL1, 0.98xEL2.1	Adelaide
	64.80	5xAPS4, 5.93xAPS5, 24.13xAPS6, 20.94xEL1, 8.80xEL2.1	Brisbane
	78.08	4.60xAPS4, 10.61xAPS5, 23.69xAPS6, 29.25xEL1, 6.32xEL2.1, 3.61xEL2.2	Canberra
	1	1xAPS5	Darwin
	4.46	3.46xAPS6, 1xEL1	Hobart
	56.11	2.75xAPS4, 11xAPS5, 17.03xAPS6, 20.73xEL1, 3.6xEL2.1, 1xEL2.2	Melbourne
	5	1xAPS5, 2xAPS6, 2xEL1	Newcastle
	4	1xAPS5, 1xAPS6, 2xEL1	Perth
	43.35	7xAPS4, 3xAPS5, 17.61xAPS6, 12.74xEL1, 3xEL2.1	Sydney
	6.98	6.11xAPS6, 0.87xEL1	Townsville
2	2xEL1	Wollongong	
(ii) Non-Ongoing Staff	0	N/A	N/A
(iii) Contracted Staff	0	N/A	N/A

Total ongoing staff FTE at 31 August 2012: 277.45

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The ATO's role involves engaging with millions of individuals, businesses and superannuation funds every year. The ATO aims to promote willing participation with the tax and superannuation systems and therefore places significant emphasis on supporting taxpayers to understand their rights and responsibilities. Communication plays an important part in achieving this. The 277.45 FTE detailed above represents less than 1.5% of the ATO workforce.

Communication staff in the ATO undertake work including:

- leading, coordinating and providing professional and strategic advice targeted at external audiences, such as the development and implementation of external communication strategies
- developing information products to assist taxpayers in understanding their rights and obligations - for example, content for the ATO's web site, fact sheets and self help guides, digital resources and articles for both ATO and third party publications
- managing ATO participation in whole-of-government campaign processes and campaigns as well as non-campaign advertising, advising on, ensuring and assuring ATO compliance with whole-of-government advertisement guidelines.

Included in the 277.45 FTE at 31 August 2012 were 7 FTE in the ATO's Public Affairs Branch working in media management including preparing and issuing media releases and responding to media enquiries.

However, the majority of the 277.45 FTE undertake communication activities that support taxpayers and tax professionals to understand their rights and responsibilities with the aim of promoting willing participation with the tax and superannuation systems. The ATO also makes an ongoing investment in communication to maintain levels of compliance and to address specific compliance risks.

The following examples are representative of the kind of work undertaken by ATO communications staff:

- 30 FTE who develop communication strategies and messaging in relation to compliance risks and new measures in the individuals and micro business markets including the development of tax time products and implementation of the tax time campaign each year, along with conducting user testing of products with individuals and small businesses
- 10 FTE responsible for development and implementation of communication activities for Project Wickenby, development and publication of the ATO *Targeting Tax Crime* e-magazine, and communication in the aggressive tax planning area which is responsible for warning taxpayers about tax avoidance schemes
- 3 FTE delivering communication to address cash economy risks
- 12 FTE providing tax professionals with ongoing communication in recognition of the important role they play in the tax and superannuation systems
- 30 FTE developing and delivering communication relating to Indirect Taxes, including communication to address a range of risks under the *GST Compliance Program – working together to improve voluntary compliance*, and designing and delivering communication about new legislation affecting taxpayers obligations and entitlements with indirect tax such as GST, excise, wine equalisation tax, fuel tax credits, luxury car tax, taxation of alternative fuels, cleaner fuels grants scheme, product stewardship for oil, energy grants credits scheme and the clean energy range of measures
- 6.6 FTE in the online marketing team managing the ATO's Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other social media activities, which seek to promote useful information for taxpayers and tax professionals

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- 28 FTE developing and implementing communication strategies and maintaining communication products related to superannuation including 17.5 FTE across the ATO working on the Super Reform measures and campaign advertising.
- 11 FTE delivering online webinars and some face to face seminars on a variety of tax topics (income tax, superannuation and goods and services tax) to individuals, micro businesses and tax agents
- 16 FTE managing the co-ordination, training and administration of volunteers for the ATO tax help program, developing strategies for youth engagement, progressing the ATO's initiative to include tax and superannuation education in various levels of the education and training systems, co-ordinating and administering the *Tax, Super + You* education program and managing the tax file number application program in secondary schools
- 49 FTE providing communication services relating to large business and international tax dealings, developing, implementing and evaluating communication strategies for new measures, priority risks and key focus areas in the small and medium enterprises segment, including moderation of the online forum - *SME Community* and production of online newsletter - *SME Communicator* and relationship management of industry forums including the Financial Services Industry Partnership, Charities Consultative Committee and Clubs Forum
- 15 FTE engaging with, and providing information to, taxpayers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 8 FTE providing communication to assist taxpayers in managing debt

The remaining 51 FTE work across the ATO perform various communication roles including development of scripting used by call centre operators to assist taxpayers when they telephone the ATO, development of corporate communication approaches including improvements to ATO service delivery, providing communication products relating to business registration and reporting obligations and coordinating delivery of communication products through the ATO website and print channels.

The ATO is reviewing the methodology of attributing staff to marketing communication activities to ensure it accurately reflects the work they do.