

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

17 October – 18 October 2012

Question: SBT 618-626

Topic: Freedom of Information - Treasury

Written: Received from Committee – 26 October 2012

Senator BUSHBY asked:

- 618. Has the department/agency received any updated advice on how to respond to FOI requests?
- 619. What is the total cost to the department/agency to process FOI requests for 2011-12?
- 620. How many FOI requests did the department/agency receive in 2011-12?
- 621. How many requests were denied and how many were granted?
- 622. Did the department fail to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests?
 - a. If so, how many?
 - b. Do any of these requests remain outstanding?
- 623. What is the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for this financial year to date (26 October 2012)?
- 624. How many FOI requests has the Department received for this financial year to date (26 October 2012)?
- 625. How many requests have been denied and how many have been granted?
- 626. Has the department failed to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests?
 - a. If so, how many and why?
 - b. Do any of these requests remain outstanding? If so, how many and why?

Answer:

- 618. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner has issued guidelines under s 93A of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. On 24 June 2011, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet provided FOI Guidance Notes to all departments on certain exemptions http://www.dpmc.gov.au/foi/guidance_notes.cfm.
- 619. The Treasury is required to estimate the staff-hours spent on FOI matters in the annual statistical return to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner calculates total reported cost attributable to FOI for all agencies for inclusion in their Freedom of Information Annual Report.

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In 2011-12, five Treasury staff spent 75 per cent or more of their time on FOI work, and 333 staff spent less than 75 per cent of their time on such work (i.e. policy areas involved in processing FOI requests including decision making or advising a decision maker).

The total hours the Treasury took to process FOI requests for 2011-12 was 13,415 hours.

620. Treasury received 153 Freedom of Information requests between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012. Note: Figures are for the department only and do not include minister's office requests.

621. Of the 153 requests Treasury received in 2011-12; as at 30 June 2012:

- 11 granted access in full
- 35 granted access in part
- 16 withdrawn by applicant
- 41 deemed withdrawn (no response from applicant)
- 43 refused (no documents exist)
- 4 transferred in full to another agency
- 3 decision still pending

622. The Treasury failed to meet the statutory processing times for three requests in the period of 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012. These requests have now been finalised.

623. The Treasury is required to estimate the staff-hours spent on FOI matters in the annual statistical return to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner calculates total reported cost attributable to FOI for all agencies for inclusion in their Freedom of Information Annual Report.

There are currently no figures available for this financial year.

624. The Treasury received 46 Freedom of Information requests between 1 July 2012 and 26 October 2012. Note: Figures are for the department only and do not include minister's offices requests.

625. Of the 46 requests received between 1 July 2012 and 26 October 2012:

- 3 granted access in full
- 3 granted access in part
- 7 withdrawn by applicant
- 9 deemed withdrawn (no response from applicant)
- 9 refused (no documents exist)
- 3 transferred in full to another agency
- 12 decision still pending

626. The Treasury did not fail to meet the statutory processing times for any requests in the period of 1 July 2012 and 26 October 2012.