

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES (SUPPLEMENTARY HEARINGS) 2013-2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman

Outcome/Program:

Outcome 1. Fair and accountable administrative action by Australian Government agencies by investigating complaints, reviewing administrative action and inspecting statutory compliance by law enforcement agencies.

Topic: Public Service Efficiencies

Senator: Senator Ludwig

Question reference number: 176

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 January 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- (1) Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- (2) 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?
- (3) 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?
- (4) Has the department/agency reduced its printing costs? If no, why not? Have printing costs increased, and if yes why and how much?
- (5) 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:

- (1) Yes, the Office has reduced its spending on business flights. It is not possible to quantify savings into the forward estimate savings as information is not recorded in a manner that provides for interrogation without an unreasonable diversion of resources.

- (2) Yes, the Office has reduced its use of external consultants and contractors. The Office has reprioritised work and reduced the scope of projects to meet reductions in contractors/consultancy spend.

It is not possible to quantify the forward estimate savings as the Office has an irregular pattern of spend in relation to these costs.

- (3) Only advertisements for SES or Statutory Officer positions have been undertaken in printed materials. There is no significant impact from moving recruitment on-line. The savings are insignificant due to the size and recruitment activity of the Office.

It is not possible to quantify the forward estimate savings as the Office has an irregular pattern of spend in relation to these costs.

- (4) Yes, the Office has reduced its reliance on printed materials and thus the associated printing costs.

It is not possible to quantify the forward estimate savings as the Office has an irregular pattern of spend in relation to these costs.

- (5) Yes, the Office has achieved the five per cent savings target by reducing the printing of Ombudsman factsheets and operational publications. The Office is unable to quantify the forward estimate savings as it does not budget at this line item level.