

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Supplementary Estimates - November 2013
ANSWER TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General

Program 1: Support for the Governor-General and Official Activities

Outcome 1: The performance of the Governor-General's role is facilitated through the organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official household and property and administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system.

Topic: Freedom of Information

Senator: Ludwig

Question reference number: QoN 191

Type of Question: Written

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

Number of Pages: 3

1. Can the department please outline the process it under goes to access Freedom of Information requests?
2. Does the department consult or inform the Minister when it receives Freedom of Information requests?
 - a) If so, when?
 - b) If so, how does this occur?
3. Does the department consult or inform other departments or agencies when it receives Freedom of Information requests?
 - a) If so, which departments or agencies?
 - b) If so, when?
 - c) If so, how does this occur?
4. Does the department consult or inform the Minister when or before it makes a decision on a Freedom of Information request?
 - a) If so, when?
 - b) If so, how does this occur?
5. Does the department consult or inform other departments or agencies when or before it makes a decision on a Freedom of Information request?
 - a) If so, which departments or agencies?
 - b) If so, when?
 - c) If so, how does this occur?
6. What resources does the department commit to its Freedom of Information team?
7. List the staffing resources by APS level assigned solely to Freedom of Information requests
8. List the staffing resources by APS level assigned indirectly to Freedom of Information requests
9. Does the department ever second addition resources to processing Freedom of Information requests?

- a) If so, please detail those resources by APS level
10. How many officers are currently designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the department?
 - a) How does this differ to the number of officers designated as at 6 September 2013?
 11. How many officers are currently designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the Minister's office?
 - a) How does this differ to the number of officers designated as at 6 September 2013?
 12. Of the officers that are designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the Ministers office, how many are seconded officers from the department?
 13. What training does the department provide to designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act who work within the department?
 - a) Of the officers designated as decision makers within the department, how many have received formal training?
 - b) Of the officers designated as decision makers within the department, how many have received informal training?
 - c) How long after each officers appointment as a designated decision maker did they receive formal training?
 - d) What did the training involve?
 - e) How long was the training?
 - f) By whom was the training conducted?
 14. What training does the department provide to designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act who work within the Minister's office, excluding those officers on secondment from the department?
 - a) Of the officers designated as decision makers, how many have received formal training?
 - b) Of the officers designated as decision makers, how many have received informal training?
 - c) How long after each officers appointment as a designated decision maker did they receive formal training?
 - d) What did the training involve?
 - e) How long was the training?
 - f) By whom was the training conducted?

Answer:

1. In accordance with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet FOI handling guidance the Office acknowledges receipt of FOI requests and responds within 30 days.
2. N/A
3. The Office does not routinely consult other departments and agencies when it receives FOI requests. It would do so if an FOI request potentially affected the information holdings of other department/s or agency/ies.
4. N/A
5. The Office would consult or inform other departments or agencies before making a decision on an FOI request if the substance of the request potentially affected such departments or agencies.
6. The Office does not have a dedicated FOI team. Appropriate staff are tasked to undertake FOI work as and when required.
7. Nil

8. Office staff are tasked to undertake FOI work as and when indicated by individual FOI requests. Staff ranging from GHO6 to SES levels would normally be assigned to FOI works as required.
9. No
10. Two – the Official Secretary and the Deputy Official Secretary.
 - a) It does not differ.
11. N/A
12. N/A
13. No formal training courses provided, but on the job training received and relevant resources made available.
 - a) Nil
 - b) Two
 - c) N/A
 - d) N/A
 - e) N/A
 - f) N/A
14. N/A