

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-387

OUTCOME 0: Whole of Portfolio

Topic: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

- a) Has the Department/Agency received any advice on how to respond to FOI requests?
- b) How many FOI requests has the Department received?
- c) How many have been granted or denied?
- d) How many conclusive certificates have been issued in relation to FOI requests?

Answer:

- a) The Australian Information Commission has issued guidelines for the purposes of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). The Department has regard to the guidelines in the performance of functions and exercise of powers under the FOI Act.
- b) From 23 February 2011 (the Additional Estimate's hearings) to 31 May 2011, the Department received 80 freedom of information requests.
- c) Decisions have been made on 21 requests since the February 2011 Additional Estimates. Of these 21, 8 were denied and 13 were granted access in full or in part. 14 requests were withdrawn (7 were withdrawn by the applicant and 7 were deemed withdrawn as the applicant did not pay a deposit within the prescribed period) which effectively means that 35 requests have been completed since the February 2011 Additional Estimates.
- d) Nil. The *Freedom of Information (Removal of Conclusive Certificates and Other Measures) Act 2009* which commenced on 7 October 2009 abolished conclusive certificates for all exemptions under the FOI Act.