

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2014

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications

Question No: 329

Program No. Corporate

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staff reductions

Senator Seselja asked:

1. What are your current and forward plans for staff reductions, including redundancies?
2. How many of these reductions and redundancies relate to efficiency dividends applied over the last three years?
3. How many of these reductions and redundancies relate to decisions made in the 2013 Budget, or earlier, to cease or terminate programs?
4. If redundancies have been offered, when was the decision made to offer these redundancies?

Answer:

1. The Department expects that staffing will need to fall by approximately 20-25% from current levels in order to meet future budget requirements. Over the coming months, the Department will be moving to a structure that aligns its people and resources to the strategic priorities identified in the 2014-17 Corporate Plan.

The Department will conduct a layer-by-layer design and selection process to redesign and fill positions in the new structure.

All ongoing employees will have the opportunity to apply for a position in the new structure at their substantive classification, or indicate their interest in a voluntary redundancy.

The Department's focus is on ensuring that this process is open, transparent and fair, and that staff see it to be open, transparent and fair. Organisational Design and Staff Selection Guidelines have been developed taking into consideration staff feedback received through the Workplace Consultative Committee (WCC), other workplace representatives, open space sessions and various communication channels.

- 2-3. The Department manages change in funding holistically. Together with the increase in the efficiency dividend, a number of other factors have affected the Department's funding in 2014-15 and the forward years, including: the termination or wind-back of programs, including Digital Switchover and Digital Productivity programs; the ceasing of one-off funding for some activities related to the development of the National Broadband Network; Machinery of Government changes; and the impact of other savings measures imposed on agencies.
4. Staff were invited in April 2013 to express interest in an offer of voluntary redundancy. Fifty staff accepted the offer of a voluntary redundancy.

The Department's process for voluntary redundancies is set out in the Enterprise Agreement and SES Guidelines

While staff may submit an expression of interest for a voluntary redundancy at any time, a voluntary redundancy will generally only be offered after the selection process for their level has been conducted.