

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 170

**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates

**Outcome:** Corporate

**Programme:** Corporate Strategies Division

**Topic:** Unfilled Positions

**Hansard Page:** 7

**Question Date:** 18 November 2013

**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Urquhart asked:**

Senator URQUHART: How many unfilled positions do you currently have?

Ms Carlos: I would have to take that on notice. What we have been doing within the organisation for more than 12 months now—we have had very tight management of our recruitment—so we have only been really filling critical vacancies. That process has been underway for some time in terms of managing our budgetary picture. In terms of vacant positions, we have moved our workforce around to where our priorities are. So we have positions that might be vacant, but they would not be positions that we would be inclined to fill.

**Answer:**

The design and configuration of the Department's Human Resource Information Management System does not enable extraction of the data necessary to provide an accurate and reliable response to this question. There would be a considerable number of unfilled positions recorded, but the majority of them would be unfunded and the Department has no plans to fill them.

There are several positions that are regarded as critical and/or specialist and the Department is seeking to fill them, with the endorsement of the Executive Board and approval from the Australian Public Service Commissioner, in line with the procedures recently introduced by the Commissioner.

As at 31 October 2013, there are nineteen such requests for either a single vacancy or several positions to be filled. The majority of these positions are located in the Australian Antarctic Division (expeditioners and single-discipline technical specialists) and Parks Australia (horticultural specialists and Special Measures positions located in national parks). Other vacancies include legal officer, water chemistry monitoring manager and work, health and safety specialist.