

**Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Additional Estimates 2013-2014**

**Cross Portfolio**

**Department of Education Question No. ED0401\_14**

**Senator Carr asked on 26 February 2014 , Hansard page 9**

**Question**

***Blue Book FOI***

Senator KIM CARR: Now in the previous round after the last election, how many [application for FOI request for 'blue' book] did you agree to? Mr Kriz: I would not— Ms Paul: We will have to take that on notice. Senator KIM CARR: And in the previous round, how many did you agree to after levying a fee? Ms Paul: We would have in all cases I think. I do not know. Let us take that on notice. Senator KIM CARR: How many did you agree to where you levied a fee and then, for whatever reason, waived the fee? Mr Kriz: I have not got that information in front of me. But the pertinent point in relation to the fee is that the fee is not applied by the departments in order for guaranteed access. In fact, it is a fee to enable the recouping of some of the costs of actually making the decision. The decision could be to grant access fully, partially or not to grant access, and the fee applies in each of those circumstances. CHAIR: Yes, I think that is a good spot. Senator KIM CARR: I just want to be clear. Can you take on notice: on the previous occasion in how many circumstances did you waive the fee? Ms Paul: Yes, we are happy to do that. And you are still talking about the context of incoming briefs in the last elections? Senator KIM CARR: Incoming ministers, yes. Ms Paul: That is fine.

**Answer**

The former Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations processed three freedom of information requests for the 'Blue Book' after the federal election in July 2010. Only one request continued to be processed by the department after a charge was imposed. In that instance the applicant withdrew the request before paying the charge, after being advised that an administrative decision had been made to publish the Blue Book on the department's website (with deletions made of material consistent with certain exemptions set out under the FOI Act).