

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-2014

Cross Portfolio

Department of Education Question No. ED0151_14

Senator Carr asked on 20 November 2013, Hansard page 5

Question

Freedom of Information (FOI) Resource Allocations

Senator KIM CARR: How do you calculate the number of hours required for resource allocations? Mr Storen: The FOI unit in the department has a process by which they determine the number of pages required to be examined in responding to the request. I could take that on notice if you like.

Answer

Typically the department undertakes the following process to calculate the number of hours that processing an FOI request will likely take and therefore the amount of resources required:

- following receipt of an FOI request, the department undertakes a thorough search of its records to identify the number of documents and pages that fall within the scope of the request;
- after having regard to the relevant documents, an assessment is made as to whether the department will need to consult with any third parties;
- this information is then input into the charges calculator provided by the Australian Government Solicitor. This charges calculator is provided to agencies for use in the calculation of processing time and any applicable charges under the FOI Act and is in common usage;
- the decision-maker then applies his or her own experience to evaluate the reasonableness of the processing time and amount of charge calculated.