

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Review of the Defence Annual Report 2015-16 – 17 February 2017

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Defence

Topic: Benchmarks for vetting performance

Question reference number: 5

Senator: Reynolds

Type of question: asked on Friday, 17 February 2017, Hansard page 20

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 06 March 2017

Question:

CHAIR: What is the benchmark for the different categories?

Mr Sargeant: It is six months for a positive vet clearance. But in the last year we have had a huge increase in productivity in that area. I need to get the figures in detail.

CHAIR: I am happy for you to take that on notice—what the benchmarks are and how you are tracking in terms of improvements in time frames. If someone is engaging with Defence in terms of any contracts, six months is a long time.

Mr Sargeant: Some go quicker; some go slower; it depends on the nature of them.

CHAIR: I am happy for you to take that on notice.

Answer:

The table below outlines the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency benchmarks and improvements in vetting timeframes and completions.

Australian Government Security Vetting Agency commenced a comprehensive positive vetting remediation program in January 2016. The scale of the positive vetting remediation task means that the positive vetting backlog and average positive vetting processing times will remain high through Financial Year 2016-17 and Financial Year 2017-18. The positive vetting backlog should be removed and returned to benchmark processing times by the end of Financial Year 2017-18.

Average processing times FY15/16 and FY16/17 to Date

Clearance Level	Benchmark Timeframe	FY15/16 Actual Average	FY15/16 Completed Clearances	Average timeframe FY16/17 Year to Date (28 Feb 2017)	FY16/17 Year to Date Completed Clearances
Baseline	1 month	1.1 months	18 217	0.8 months	13 647
Negative Vetting Level 1	4 months	4.9 months	17 487	3.1 months	12 594
Negative Vetting Level 2	6 months	7.1 months	6 248	5.3 months	4 302
Positive Vetting	6 months	17.1 months	922	16.9 months	1 037