Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet
Topic: Digital Capacity (attracting and retaining talent)

Senator: McAllister, Jenny
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Question:

a)   Why does the government need to set up a fund to invest in attracting digital talent?

b)   Is there not enough talent available currently? Why?

c)   Is the training not adequate to develop talent in Australia?

d)   Will the replacement of 457 visas make the process of attracting top international talent harder?

e)   Are there any specific areas/skills that will be targeted using this funding?

Answer:

a)   For the government to be able to deliver government digital services well, it needs to support the Australian Public Service (APS) to build knowledge and capability to manage ICT in a digital future. As technology evolves, reskilling of staff is critical.

b)   The 2015 APS Employee Census revealed only 15% of employees had received formal digital skills training. Good digital talent is not only in demand in government but in many commercial organisations. The digital services market is also developing to meet government needs.

c)   As technology continues to evolve, competition for staff with digital expertise will only increase. Building internal digital capability makes the APS less exposed to increasing market rates, reduces design and delivery risk, and will see digital skills become a core capability of the APS unlocking further potential for innovation.

d)   There are no holders of 457 visas at the Digital Transformation Agency.

e)   Yes, the program will focus on specialist skills and expertise in cloud, digital service delivery, and ethical data.