

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2016-17

Finance Portfolio
28 February 2017

Department/Agency: Finance

Outcome/Program: General

Topic: Use of contractor service providers and consultants

Senator: Gallagher

Question reference number: F30

Type of question: Hansard Proof, F&PA Committee, Page 67, 28 February 2017

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Thursday, 13 April 2017

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator GALLAGHER: What is happening with the use of contractor service providers and consultants? Is it going up?

Senator Cormann: In terms of numbers?

Senator GALLAGHER: Numbers and value of contracts.

Senator Cormann: We will have to take specific numbers on notice. Are you interested in trend numbers?

...

Senator Cormann: The ASL numbers are published in the budget papers; that is why I can give them to you. That is something that we directly track.

Senator GALLAGHER: But surely Finance keeps an eye on what is happening across the Public Service in relation to the use of consultants and contractors.

Senator Cormann: It does obviously get managed on a portfolio-by-portfolio basis. The efficiency dividend is applied, which means that departmental resources, of course, are kept as efficient as possible. But, in terms of specific numbers, we will take that on notice.

...

Senator GALLAGHER: I do not disagree that there is a use and a time and place for consultants and contractors. I guess what I am interested in is whether, as you are keeping the growth of public servants at a stable level, you are seeing increases in other areas. Some would argue that there are some false savings there. If you provide that on notice, that would be useful.

Answer:

Consultancy Contracts

Finance does not collect information on individual employment contracts by agencies. However, consultancy contracts for non-corporate Commonwealth entities (\$10,000 and above) are registered on AusTender. AusTender data indicates that the number of consultancy contracts by non-corporate Commonwealth entities has decreased from 4,451 in 2010-11 to 3,224 in 2015-16. The value of these consultancy contracts as a percentage of all reported contracts on AusTender has also decreased from 1.51% in 2010-11 to 1.06% in 2015-16.

Average Staffing Level (ASL)

In the 2016-17 Budget, public sector staffing in the General Government Sector (GGS) excluding military and reserves is estimated to have reduced by about 15,000 ASL since its peak in 2011-12. The 2016-17 Budget estimates an ASL across the GGS of 167,155 in 2016-17, compared to 167,596 in 2006-07.