

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - 27 FEBRUARY 2014 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Public Service Efficiencies

Question reference number: HS 139

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 24 April 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- b) Has there been a reduction in the use of external consultants and contractors? Has this impacted on the department/agency, and how? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- c) Provide an update of moving recruitment advertising online. Is any recruitment still in printed materials, and if yes, why? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- d) Has the department/agency reduced its printing costs? If no, why not? Have printing costs increased, and if yes why and how much?
- e) Has the five per cent savings target been achieved – if yes, how, or if it will not, why not? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Answer:

- a) In 2011-12 the Department of Human Services spent \$2,117,851 (not including fees) on domestic business class staff travel.
Comparing the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 with 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013, the Department of Human Services reduced its business class travel expenditure from \$2,117,851 to \$1,246,031, a saving of \$871,820 and a decrease of 41.2 per cent.
The current financial year (July 2013 to February 2014) departmental spend for business class travel was \$605,357. Comparing the same period for financial year 2012-13, there has been saving of \$282,904, which is a reduction of 31.85 per cent.
The Department of Human Services does not forecast administrative expenses over the forward estimates.
- b) The department has reduced its external consultants and contractors. For the period 1 July 2012 to 28 February 2013 the expense recorded was \$111.1 million and for the period of 1 July 2013 to 28 February 2014 the expense recorded was \$59.5 million. This is a reduction of \$51.6 million or 46 per cent. The level of annual expenditure is in accordance with business requirements and the

Government's policy priorities. The department does not forecast these expenses over forward estimates.

- c) The Department of Human Services uses the APSJobs portal and the Department of Human Services website to advertise all vacancies open to the Australian community, subject to the Interim Arrangements for Australian Public Service Recruitment. Other forms of advertising are only considered when the APSJobs advertisement is not likely to capture the intended pool of applicants. The use of print media for an advertised vacancy is considered on a case by case basis and is subject to approval by the Secretary.

A key driver to advertising via printed media is to ensure that both appropriately skilled staff for specialist roles and/or diversity groups can be targeted. Some examples of where printed advertising occurs is in Medical Journals, Trade Magazines, Indigenous Media and the use of promotional materials for careers fairs to target specific, and critical skills, required by the department.

The estimated savings for each year in forward estimates is unknown given each recruitment activity's advertising is assessed on a case by case basis.

- d) The department has reduced its printing costs. For the period 1 July 2012 to 28 February 2013 the printing expense recorded was \$20.6 million and for the period of 1 July 2013 to 28 February 2014 the expense recorded was \$18.5 million. This is a reduction of \$2.1 million or 10 per cent.
- e) The five per cent savings target was achieved in 2012-13 by taking advantage of economies of scales by reducing the number of suppliers and decreasing the volume of information in print format. The department does not forecast these expenses over the forward estimates.