

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings November 2014
Communications Portfolio
Special Broadcasting Service

Question No: 497

Program No. Special Broadcasting Service

Hansard Ref: Hansard In writing

Topic: FOI

Senator Ludwig asked:

The following questions relate to requests made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (the Act):

Consultations with other Departments, Agencies and the Minister

1. Other than for the purpose of discussing a transfer under section 16 of the Act, does the Department consult or inform other Departments or Agencies when it receives Freedom of Information requests?
2. If so, for each instance provide a table setting out the following information:
 1. The Department or Agency which was consulted;
 2. The document;
 3. The purpose of the consultation;
 4. Whether an extension of time was sought from the applicant to allow time for the consultation, including whether it was granted and the length of the extension;
 5. Whether an extension of time was sought from the Information Commissioner to allow time for the consultation, including whether it was granted and the length of the extension
3. Other than for the purposes of discussing a transfer under section 16 of the Act, has the Department consulted or informed the Minister's office about Freedom of Information requests it has received?
4. If yes, provide a table setting out the following information:
 1. The requests with respect to which the Minister or Ministerial office was consulted;
 2. The Minister or Ministerial office which was consulted;
 3. The purpose of the consultation;
 4. Whether an extension of time was sought from the applicant to allow time for the consultation, including whether it was granted and the length of the extension;
 5. Whether an extension of time was sought from the Information Commissioner to allow time for the consultation, including whether it was granted and the length of the extension

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6. Whether any briefings (including formal briefs, email briefings and verbal briefings) were provided to the Minister's office

Staffing resources

The following questions relate to the period from 18 September 2013:

1. For the period of time from 18 September 2013, what was the average FTE is allocated to processing FOI requests?

FOI Disclosure Log

1. For the purposes of meeting its obligations under 11C of the Act, does the Department or Agency:
 1. Maintain a webpage allowing download of documents released under section 11A (direct download)?
 2. Require individuals to contact the Department or Agency to ask for the provision of those documents (request for provision)?
 3. Facilitate [access] to those documents in a different manner (if so, specify).
2. If the Department or Agency has moved from a system of meetings its 11C obligations by direct download, to a system of meeting those obligations by request for provision, provide the following information:
 1. The dates for which documents were made available for direct download, and the dates for which documents were made available through request for provision
 2. The total number of direct downloads of documents released under 11A the Departmental or Agency website;
 3. The total number of requests for provision to documents that had been directly received, and how many had been processed by [date]?
 4. What was the average FTE allocated to monitoring incoming email, collating and forwarding documents providing under a request for provision?
 1. What was the approximate cost for salaries for the FTE staff allocated to this task?
3. Has the Department or Agency charged any for access to a document under section 11C(4)?
4. If so, please provide the following information in a table:
 1. On how many occasions charges have been imposed;
 2. The amount charged for each document
 3. The total amount charged;
 4. What is the highest charge that has been imposed.

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With respect to FOI requests:

1. How many documents were assessed (at internal review or - if internal review was not requested - by the original decision maker) as conditionally exempt?
2. Of those, how many were:
 1. Released in full.
 2. Released in part.
 3. Refused access on the grounds that release of the document would be contrary to the public interest.

Other (please specify)

Answers

Consultations with other Departments, Agencies and the Minister:

1. Yes, when required to consult affected third parties under the FOI Act.
2. (1) For the period 1 May to 31 December 2014: N/A – no other Department or Agency was an affected third party.
(2) – (5) Not applicable
3. For the period 1 May to 31 December 2014: No.
4. (1) - (6) Not applicable.

Staffing resources:

1. 0.17 – period from 18 September 2013 to December 2014

FOI Disclosure Log:

1. (1) Yes
(2) In some cases
(3) SBS will consider requests on a case by case basis.
2. (1) – (4) Not applicable, SBS has not moved to such a system.
3. For the period 1 May to 31 December 2014: Nil.
4. (1)-(4) Not applicable

With respect to FOI requests:

1. For the period 1 May 2014 to 31 December 2014: 12
2. (1) Nil
(2) 10
(3) Two
Other – N/A