

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 265
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Corporate
Program: Corporate Strategies Division (CSD)
Topic: Efficiency Dividends
Hansard Page: 5
Question Date: 17 October 2016
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Waters, Larissa asked:

Dr de Brouwer: ... We cannot go back from a variable that is affected by three or four things and identify what the impact of the efficiency dividend itself is on the final number. The efficiency dividend is one aspect of why our numbers have come down, but it is hard to identify precisely what the numerical effect of that is.

Senator WATERS: Has it been similarly hard in previous years?

Dr de Brouwer: Yes. We have had the same response.

Senator WATERS: Could you get me as much detail as you can in writing on notice as to the impact of the efficiency dividend and those other three factors which you say play into the situation.

Answer:

The Department's ASL in 2016-17 (before the recent energy Machinery of Government change) was expected to decrease from 1,827 in 2015-16 to 1,755. Departmental funding also decreased in this period from \$398.9 million in 2015-16 to \$380.8 million at Budget 2016-17.

While the efficiency dividend was one factor in the decrease of departmental funding and ASL in 2016-17, it was not the only factor that impacted departmental resourcing. New and/or terminating measures, machinery of government changes, indexation and whole of government savings measures may also impact on the total amount of departmental funding available to the Department.

The Secretary exercises his discretion to allocate the total departmental funding available in any period to efficiently and effectively deliver the activities for which the Department is responsible and, given the multiple factors at play, it is not possible to quantify the individual impact of the efficiency dividend (or any of the other factors) on staffing levels.