

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

13 – 14 February 2013

Question: AET 598

Topic: Making the Public Service More Efficient

Written: Received from Committee – 22 February 2013

Senator BUSHBY asked:

598. Please provide an update of the savings achieved through pursuing further efficiencies in the way the public service operates (see media release by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Special Minister of State of 25 September 2012 at: http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2012/mr_1982012.html).

In addition, please provide the following details:

- a. Can you quantify the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates for reductions in air travel?
- b. Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?
- c. 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?
- d. 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?
- e. Has the Department/Agency reduced its printing costs? If no, why not? Have printing costs increased, and if yes why and by how much? Has the five per cent savings target been achieved – if yes, how, and if no, why not? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Answer:

598. The Commonwealth Grants Commission continues to make savings wherever possible. Use of Whole of Government purchasing arrangements, including air travel, should produce small savings but these are indeterminate at this point. Recruiting advertising is now restricted to APS Online and SEEK.com. The Commission intends to confine printing to publications which need to be tabled in the Parliament.

- a. No. Attendance by Commissioners at Commission meetings is the primary reason for travel expense. Teleconferencing is utilised where possible but this is dependent upon content of agenda and this is unpredictable.
- b. Yes. There has been some reduction in business flights because of increased use of teleconferencing. As there is no certainty that this can continue at current levels, estimates cannot be made.

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- c. No. There has been no impact on the Commission. Use of consultants is already minimal and only modest savings can be expected.
- d. The Commission has already moved to online recruitment advertising. No further savings are expected.
- e. Yes. Printing costs have not increased. The 5% savings target has been achieved by publishing one of the Commissions two major reports online. Savings for each year over the forward years are estimated at \$6000 pa.