

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates 2012

30 May 2012

Question: **BET 750**

Topic: **Social media (ATO)**

Hansard Page: **Written (13/6/12)**

Senator BUSHBY asked:

750. Has there been any changes to department and agency social media or protocols about staff access and usage of YouTube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since publication of the Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online?

If yes, please explain and provide copies of any advice that has been issued. If no, please explain why not.

Answer:

Since publication of the *Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online* (Circular 2012/1), there have been no significant changes to the ATO's social media or protocols about staff access and usage.

An education campaign to inform staff of their responsibilities when using social media is underway and includes:

- an article in the 21 May 2012 issue of the ATO's online corporate newsletter (copy at Attachment A) raising awareness of the requirements of Circular 2012/1 and educating staff about the expectations of appropriate online behaviour
- information on the appropriate use of social media has been distributed to ATO managers for discussions with staff as part of regular discussions which form part of the ATO's manager assurance program
- A policy on appropriate use of social media will soon be published on the ATO intranet to provide information and guidance to staff on the use of digital media. It will outline that staff can participate in official forums such as the Australian Government Information Management Office-hosted Govdex, covered by Circular 2012/1, which provides current advice on the practical application for employees participating in online and public discussions.

Current ATO policies access restrictions to social media sites are:

- Blocked - no access provided unless there is a genuine business need:
 - Facebook
 - YouTube
 - MySpace
- Coached - staff are asked to confirm whether their access to a site is appropriate before continuing
 - Twitter

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The ATO's Media Practice Statement PS CM 2007/03 provides guidelines for staff about making official public comment. Digital media policy and supporting documentation are currently being developed to further advise staff on the expectations on use of social media. These will be in addition to the following:

- APS Values and Code of Conduct
- Proper use of IT facilities Corporate Management Practice Statement (existing internal guidelines for ATO staff).