

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

20-21 November 2013

Question: SBT 980 - 984

Topic: Freedom of Information

Written: 25 November 2013

Senator WONG asked:

980. Since 18 September 2013 has any advice been received from the Attorney-General's Department on the handling of Freedom of Information requests?

If so, please provide details of:

- (a) the date;
- (b) the source; and
- (c) the subject of the advice.

981. How many FOI requests seeking draft or final Incoming Government Briefs has the department received since 7 September 2013?

- (a) What is the status of each request?

982. With reference to FOI requests received since 7 September 2013 seeking Incoming Government Briefs:

Can all related communications with portfolio ministers and their offices, verbal and written, be outlined, including, for each communication.

- (a) date;
- (b) purpose of communication; and
- (c) parties to the communication? Can copies of written communications be provided?

983. Does the department provide portfolio ministers and their offices with a regular update on FOI requests directed to the department and/or the offices of portfolio ministers?

If so,

- (a) on what date/s has the update been provided;
- (b) who prepares the update ;
- (c) who receives the update; and
- (d) what information is included in the update?

984. Treasury, in its decision to exempt in full IGB documents (Red Book, Blue Book and other associated documents), references guidance from the case of Crowe and Department of the Treasury [2013] AICmr 69. Could Treasury please explain the relevance of this case for determining access or otherwise to the 2013 incoming government brief?

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

20-21 November 2013

Answer:

980. No.
981. Twenty FOI requests for the Incoming Government briefs have been received since 7 September 2013.
- (a) All 20 requests have been processed to decision.
982. The Treasury, consistent with its usual practice, advised the Treasurer's Office of the status of Incoming Government Briefs through the period the requests were being processed (via a weekly status report) and notified the Office of the decision on access prior to release. Provision of all of the written communication would result in duplication of documents and be an unreasonable diversion of resources.
983. Consistent with long-standing practice, the department provides a weekly report to Treasury portfolio Ministers that sets out the current status of each FOI request on hand.
984. This decision is currently under review by Information Commissioner and so it would be inappropriate to comment on the matters raised in the question at this time.