

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Supplementary Budget Estimates

20-21 November 2013

**Question: 750 - 763**

**Topic: Freedom of Information**

**Written: 25 November 2013**

**Senator LUDWIG asked:**

750. Can the department please outline the process it under goes to access Freedom of Information requests?
751. Does the department consult or inform the Minister when it receives Freedom of Information requests?  
(a) If so, when?  
(b) If so, how does this occur?
752. Does the department consult or inform other departments or agencies when it receives Freedom of Information requests?  
(a) If so, which departments or agencies?  
(b) If so, when?  
(c) If so, how does this occur?
753. Does the department consult or inform the Minister when or before it makes a decision on a Freedom of Information request?  
(a) If so, when?  
(b) If so, how does this occur?
754. Does the department consult or inform other departments or agencies when or before it makes a decision on a Freedom of Information request?  
(a) If so, which departments or agencies?  
(b) If so, when?  
(c) If so, how does this occur?
755. What resources does the department commit to its Freedom of Information team?
756. List the staffing resources by APS level assigned solely to Freedom of Information requests
757. List the staffing resources by APS level assigned indirectly to Freedom of Information requests
758. Does the department ever second additional resources to processing Freedom of Information requests?  
(a) If so, please detail those resources by APS level
759. How many officers are currently designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the department?

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- (a) How does this differ to the number of officers designated as at 6 September 2013?
760. How many officers are currently designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the Minister's office?
- (a) How does this differ to the number of officers designated as at 6 September 2013?
761. Of the officers that are designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 within the Ministers office, how many are seconded officers from the department?
762. What training does the department provide to designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act who work within the department?
- (a) Of the officers designated as decision makers within the department, how many have received formal training?
- (b) Of the officers designated as decision makers within the department, how many have received informal training?
- (c) How long after each officers appointment as a designated decision maker did they receive formal training?
- (d) What did the training involve?
- (e) How long was the training?
- (f) By whom was the training conducted?
763. What training does the department provide to designated decision makers under the Freedom of Information Act who work within the Minister's office, excluding those officers on secondment from the department?
- (a) Of the officers designated as decision makers, how many have received formal training?
- (b) Of the officers designated as decision makers, how many have received informal training?
- (c) How long after each officers appointment as a designated decision maker did they receive formal training?
- (d) What did the training involve?
- (e) How long was the training?
- (f) By whom was the training conducted?

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#### Answer:

750. The Treasury processes all Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* having regard to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner Guidelines.
751. As has occurred under the previous Government and the current Government, the department provides a weekly report to Treasury portfolio Ministers that sets out the current status of each FOI request on hand.
752. Treasury does not consult other departments or agencies on FOI requests at the time the request is received other than for purposes of determining whether the request should be transferred to another department or agency.
753. The Treasury does not consult or inform the Ministers' offices prior to a decision on an FOI request being made. Once a decision on access has been made, the Treasurer's Office is notified, by email, of the decision.
754. Treasury does not consult with other departments or agencies on Treasury FOI requests unless documents within the scope of the request relate or refer to another department or agency.
755. There is no dedicated FOI Unit within the Treasury. The Parliamentary and Legal Services Unit (PLSU) is responsible for coordinating and processing all FOI requests as a part of its normal functions.
756. No staff are solely assigned to processing Freedom of Information requests.
757. As at 20 December 2013, there were 2 x EL2 officers, 4 x EL1 officers, 2 x APS6 officers; 2 x APS 5 officers and 3 x APS3 officers who assisted with coordinating and processing FOI requests as part of their normal duties.
758. No.
759. All Treasury SES officers have the authority to act as a designated Decision Makers if required. This was the same policy on 6 September 2013.
760. As at 20 December 2013, there were five designated decision makers across four Ministerial offices. On 6 September 2013 there were four designated decision makers across three Ministerial offices.
761. There are no Treasury seconded staff assigned as decision makers in the Ministers' offices.
762. While there is no formal training provided to decision makers, the Parliamentary and Legal Services Unit provides assistance and guidance to decision makers. Treasury has also organised internal seminars on the FOI Act, Information Commissioner guidelines and cases. PM&C guidance notes, the FOI Act and OAIC guidelines are also made available to the Department via the Treasury Intranet.
763. The Treasury does not provide any formal training to decision makers in the Ministers' offices. However, Treasury has provided briefing to each of the Ministers' offices on the operation of the Act and assistance that can be provided by the department where requests are received by a Minister.