

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

Cross Portfolio

DEEWR Question No. EW0190_14

Senator Abetz asked on 5 June 2013, Hansard page 4

Question

Relates to EW0789_13 (Allocation of computers in Minister's Office)

Senator ABETZ: Let me go to the office of the good Parliamentary Secretary and the Minister for Workplace Relations. I refer to an answer provided to question on notice 789_13, talking about equipment et cetera. Just so I understand, Minister Shorten has thirteen personal staff, is that correct? I am not talking about his electorate or the component he gets by virtue of being a member of parliament. Ms Paul: I am sorry, I have got a different— Senator ABETZ: Did I say 789? There was a table attached. Ms Paul: Yes. Senator ABETZ: It says: 'The below data is as at 28 February 2013.' Ms Paul: Yes. Senator ABETZ: Sorry, that does not have the staffing component on it. But why I was asking about the staffing component is that, as I understand it, he has thirteen personal staff in his office. Can somebody confirm that for me? Ms Paul: We can probably reasonably quickly, but I do not know. Senator ABETZ: I want to link it to the fact that he has 26 desktop computers. How does that work? Two each? Ms Paul: Don't forget that he has his electorate office as well. Presumably there would be a parliamentary— Senator ABETZ: Wait a minute. That would be funded by ministerial and parliamentary services, as opposed to the department, wouldn't they. Ms Paul: Yes, we will look into that. Senator ABETZ: Provision of equipment to ministers was the topic and question, so it wasn't two private members of parliament. As I understand it, apart from his electorate staff he has a ministerial component of thirteen staff and each of them seem to have been given—in fairness he would have a desktop computer, for example, and the DLO in the office may well have a desktop computer. Ms Paul: The office does work a fair bit out of the office. The electorate office in Melbourne is also a ministerial office and we always have to duplicate our equipment in the various offices because of security reasons, I think. So you end up having a DEEWR computer in Parliament House and you end up having a DEEWR computer in wherever else you base yourself. Senator ABETZ: So that figure then of 26 would make sense if all the ministerial staff were to travel to the electorate/ministerial office. But is it ever the situation that all the— Ms Paul: Yes, it is. I have been there when that has been the situation. Senator ABETZ: Which means that there is nobody left in the Canberra office. Ms Paul: That has happened. It is a ministerial office as well. But whether he has got thirteen I just do not know. We might need to check that out for you.

Answer

As at 28 February 2013 Minister Shorten was allocated 26 desktop computers:

- 15 in Parliament House
- 11 in the electoral office.

Of the 15 desktop computers in Parliament House one desktop computer was allocated to Minister Shorten, thirteen to his ministerial staff and there was one spare computer.

The enterprise agreement for MOPS* staff states that personal staff are ministerial staff including senior staff and does not include electorate office staff. Minister Shorten's office is a combined electorate/ministerial office. The Department has provided equipment to his personal staff because they would be working out of the combined office in non-sitting weeks. Based on the Department's IT equipment records, the number of personal staff in Minister Shorten office at the end of February 2013 was 13.

*Staff employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*