

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

Cross Portfolio

Department of Education Question No. ED0546_15

Senator O'Neill provided in writing.

Question

Deregulation unit

With respect to the Department's deregulation unit: a. Can the Department provide an updated breakdown on the number of staff in the unit; their pay level; which section of the Department the staff member came from; and whether the position they vacated to move to the unit has been backfilled by a permanent staff member, or filled by a temporary contractor; b. Can the Department provide the total estimated annual cost of operating the deregulation unit; c. Can the Department provide a list of "red tape reduction" measures the Department has announced since the change of Government, the value of the reduction in compliance cost the Government has attributed to each measure, and the status of each measure's progress. d. Can the Department provide all written advice and guidelines the deregulation unit is utilising in its methodology to cost the value it assigns to "red tape reduction" measures. e. Can the department provide a list of all of the recommendations from the red tape reduction unit that have been adopted by Government – including the estimated costs and benefits of each change. f.

Can the Department provide the Government's expectations for the Department of Education red tape reduction unit

Answer

- A.** Can the Department provide an updated breakdown on the number of staff in the unit; their pay level; which section of the Department the staff member came from; and whether the position they vacated to move to the unit has been backfilled by a permanent staff member, or filled by a temporary contractor;

As at November 2014, there are 7.4 officers in the Deregulation Unit. The levels of staff within the Unit range from Australian Public Service (APS) level 5 to Executive Level (EL) 2. Staff were assigned to the Unit from both corporate and line areas. One of the positions has been backfilled by a permanent staff member. No contractors have been used.

- B.** Can the Department provide the total estimated annual cost of operating the deregulation unit

The estimated annual salary cost of the unit is \$780,000. This cost has been met from within the Department of Education's existing resources.

- C.** Can the Department provide a list of “red tape reduction” measures the Department has announced since the change of Government, the value of the reduction in compliance cost the Government has attributed to each measure, and the status of each measure’s progress?

The Department of Education has contributed to both of the Government’s Repeal Days which were held in 2014. Details are available on the cuttingredtape.gov.au website:

- Autumn Repeal Day - http://www.cuttingredtape.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/repeal_day_initiatives.pdf
- Spring Repeal Day 2014 - http://www.cuttingredtape.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2014_spring_repeal_day_overview.pdf

The department will report on progress in reducing red tape and regulatory burden annually, with the first annual report due for publication in early 2015. Measures which relate to reduction in reporting requirements across the portfolio will be part of that broader report.

- D.** Can the Department provide all written advice and guidelines the deregulation unit is utilising in its methodology to cost the value it assigns to “red tape reduction” measures?

The Department of Education uses the published guidance material from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) in carrying out all costing of regulatory burden in both the audit of regulation and red tape reduction measures undertaken. For significant measures, assessed by the Office of Best Practice Regulation as requiring a Regulation Impact Statement and agreed costing, the Department has utilised the online Regulatory Burden Measure which applies formulae consistent with the PM&C guidance material.

The PM&C guidance material is publicly available and can be found at: <http://www.dpmc.gov.au/deregulation/obpr/reporting-publications/publications.cfm>

- E.** Can the department provide a list of all of the recommendations from the red tape reduction unit that have been adopted by Government – including the estimated costs and benefits of each change?

The Deregulation Unit works with line areas within the Education portfolio to identify opportunities for deregulation. It does not make recommendations to Government on red tape reduction.

- F.** Can the Department provide the Government’s expectations for the Department of Education red tape reduction unit?

The expectations from government for all portfolio Deregulation Units is outlined on page 9 of the Australian Government Guide to Regulation at: http://www.cuttingredtape.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/australian_government_guide_regulation.pdf