

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 1

Outcome All: Program General

Topic: Military Culture and Mental Health Training

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 97 & 98)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: So you have someone who has been doing this as part of their job since 2009. They have done 150 people. How long was the training session between this gentleman, who has been doing it since 2009, and these 13 people?

Mr Winzenberg: He had a good half day to take them through what he does.

Senator RONALDSON: When was that?

Mr Winzenberg: It was prior to Christmas.

Senator RONALDSON: What date was it?

Mr Winzenberg: I do not have the exact date. I would have to get that.

Senator RONALDSON: Can you get me the exact date, the exact times and the exact location? Also, can you tell me what the content of that presentation was?

Senator RONALDSON: Right. Well, you are five hundred people too late, but I accept that you are going to do it. Could I make a request of you that will need to go through the official channels, Parliamentary Secretary. I would be very interested in attending one of these sessions. I am not asking you for an answer tonight, but I would ask you to take that on notice.

Answer

The train-the-trainer session was conducted on 21 December, from 11.30am to approximately 2.00pm. Mr Wauer, the original presenter, ran the session from the Adelaide office and it was video-conferenced to DVA locations in Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Hobart and Perth. Mr Wauer briefed the new presenters and took them through the training presentation.

The session included discussion about the presentation, key messages and overall content, including the video resources. The session also provided opportunity for the new presenters to ask questions.

Mr Wauer has relevant experience and qualifications, namely:

- six years (combination of full-time and part-time) Army service as an infantry officer;
- post-graduate psychology qualifications;
- his father is a Vietnam veteran; and
- his brother-in-law served in Rwanda.

The follow-up session on 3 February 2012 provided presenters with further opportunity to ask questions, raise any issues and provide feedback on the course content, resources, etc. after they had had time to familiarise themselves with the presentation. This session was also conducted by video-conference to the locations mentioned above.

Thereafter, there was significant contact via email and phone to potential presenters, including providing an up-dated presentation, with speaker notes. The content of the presentation included:

- an overview of Australian military conflicts;
- an outline of the veteran community, their experiences and the impact upon families;
- an insight into military training and culture;
- a range of veteran experiences and the potential impacts on mental health and wellbeing;
and
- examples and anecdotes designed to raise awareness of DVA mental health resources.

An advisor from the Office of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs will telephone Senator Ronaldson's office to formally invite the Senator to a future session of the Military Culture and Mental Health training.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 2

Outcome All: Program General

Topic: Staffing Figure Breakdown

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 102)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: I will finish off on the staff. I am sure there is a very sensible answer to this: as to question on notice No. 8, with the breakdown of staff by location and position, you indicate that, as at 30 September, there were 2,070 staff working in the department, but on page 324 of the annual report you say that, as of 30 June, there were 2,051 staff. Is it too simplistic to say that there has been an increase-and I am not talking about ASLs, obviously-of 19 people over that three-month period?

Mr I Campbell: That is correct.

Senator RONALDSON: Where did they go, Mr Winzenberg? Where were they deployed to?

Mr Winzenberg: The figures include not only full-time staff but also non-ongoing staff. As the secretary mentioned, there are a number of non-ongoings in the department. At the end of January we had 107, and typically they have short-term contracts; they could be here for three weeks or three months. So there are ebbs and flows. At any point in time there are up to 30 people on leave who come back into the workforce. So there is churn all the time.

Senator RONALDSON: But we acknowledge that there are an extra 19 staff?

Mr Winzenberg: I do not know where the extra 19 are. We would have to do-

Senator RONALDSON: Can you take that on notice?

Mr I Campbell: We will take that on notice. My guess is that a lot of it is particular project work. We are doing some quite substantial IT development at the moment. We will take that on notice and come back to you.

Answer

Table 2.1 Net headcount variation by branch: 30 June – 30 September 2011

The Department's total staffing (headcount) did increase by 19 between 30 June 2011 and 30 September 2011. The details are set out in the table below.

DVA Branch	Net
ANZAC Centenary & Planning	5
Business Integrity & Legal Services	-1
Commemorations	0
Community Health Group	-1
Corporate Support Unit	2
Defence Support Services	-5
Deputy Commissioner NSW/ACT	6
Deputy Commissioner QLD	1
Deputy Commissioner SA	-1
Deputy Commissioner TAS	-1
Deputy Commissioner VIC	2

Deputy Commissioner WA	-3
Executive Division Executive	1
ICT Solutions	-1
Income Support	6
Office Australian War Graves	-1
Parliamentary & Communication	5
People Services	2
Primary Care Policy	4
Primary Health	3
Rehabilitation & Entitlements Policy	1
Rehabilitation, Compensation & System Support	0
Repatriation Medical Authority	0
Research, Grants & Consultation	0
Services Division Executive	0
Support Division Executive	-1
Veterans Review Board	-2
Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service	-2
Total	19

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 3

Outcome All: Program General

Topic: Staffing Figure Breakdown

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Will the Department provide a breakdown of staff as at 15 February 2012 including a full breakdown of staff by classification and location, including a list of staff by location and classification who are on leave including long service leave, maternity leave, leave without pay, extended sick leave and other types of leave. Can the Department indicate when staff on these leave are due to resume duties?

Answer

Table 3.1 Staff Numbers by Classification and Location at 15/02/2012

Actual Classification	ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	Tas	Vic	WA	Total
Advocate		2		3	1		4	1	11
APS1	6	2		6		3	1		18
APS2	9	29	1	23	4	1	4	4	75
APS3	19	53	1	82	42	28	58	28	311
APS4	68	38	3	56	11	7	43	14	240
APS5	54	105	5	120	43	18	71	33	449
APS6	168	64	3	79	31	13	76	24	458
EL1	175	29		41	15	2	33	9	304
EL2	71	10	2	21	4	2	7	2	119
GAPS	15								15
Legal 1	8	1					1		10
Legal 2	2						1		3
MO 3				2					2
MO 4				1					1
PAO 1	5								5
PAO 2	4								4
PAO 3	9			1					10
SES 1	16	1			1		2	1	21
SES 2	5	1		1			1		8
SPAO	1								1
Statutory*	4	1							5
Total	639	336	15	436	152	74	302	116	2070

The above table is a headcount of active staff at this date. It excludes the 30 inactive staff members who were on “Leave of Absence”, either because of being on long term (greater than three months continuous) unpaid leave or on temporary transfer to another agency. These 30 staff are detailed in Table 3.3. It does however include the 265 staff in Table 3.2 who were on some form of leave on 15 February 2012.

* Full time statutory office holders.

Table 3.2 Active Staff on leave on 15/02/2012

Classification	Workers Compensation	Long Service Leave	Maternity Leave	Miscellaneous Paid Leave	*Miscellaneous Unpaid Leave	**Personal Leave (includes sick leave)	Recreation Leave	Total
Advocate	1							1
APS1						1		1
APS2			1			3	5	9
APS3	2	3	3		4	18	19	49
APS4	1	2	6		4	16	15	44
APS5	5	6	6		2	24	16	59
APS6	2	5	4		3	19	25	58
EL1	2	4	3		2	9	9	29
EL2		4					5	9
Legal 1			2			1		3
PAO 1							1	1
PAO 3						1		1
Statutory							1	1
Total	13	24	25	0	15	92	96	265

* Miscellaneous Unpaid Leave – for example: extended defence reserve leave, spouse posting.

** Personal Leave caters for sick leave, carer's leave, bereavement leave, etc.

Table 3.3 Inactive Staff at 15/02/2012

Actual Classification	ACT	NSW	Qld	SA	Tas	Vic	WA	Total
APS2						1		1
APS3	1		1	1	1	1		5
APS4		1	1					2
APS5	3	2	1				1	7
APS6	3		1			1		5
EL1	3					1		4
EL2	4							4
PAO 3			1					1
SES 1	1							1
Total	15	3	5	1	1	4	1	30

It is not possible for the Department to accurately indicate when staff on leave are due to resume duties without interrogating every record individually. The time and effort to accurately provide this information would be too resource intensive.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 4

Outcome All: Program General

Topic: Contracts

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Will the Department provide a breakdown of all staff employed on contracts, including location of employment, duration of employment and nature of contracted work?

Answer

Staff employed on contracts is defined as non-ongoing APS personnel whose employment has a contract end date. The following two tables summarise DVA's non-ongoing employees at 15 February 2012 by classification and location, and by classification and duration of employment.

Details of the nature of their contracted work is not recorded in the Human Resource Management System and the time and effort to accurately provide this information would be too resource intensive.

Table 4.1 Non-ongoing employees by location as at 15 February 2012.

ACT	NSW	Qld	SA	Tas	Vic	WA	Total
36	5	46	5	8	10	3	113

Table 4.2 Non-ongoing employees by length of service as at 15 February 2012.

0-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	>12 months	Total
20	40	29	24	113

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

REVISED - Question 5

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Contractors

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HUMPHRIES asked:

1. How many contractors are currently employed in the department/agency?
2. How many contractors have been under contract for a period of more than 2 years?
3. How many contractors have been under contract for a period of more than 5 years?
4. How many contractors have been under contract for a period of more than 10 years?
5. Does the department/agency make a habit of employing contractors to fill positions on a permanent basis?

Answer

As at 15 February 2012:

1. A total of 207 contractors are currently employed.
2. 13 contractors had been employed for a period of between 2 and 5 years.
3. 10 contractors had been employed for a period of between 5 and 10 years.
4. 9 contractors had been employed for a period of more than 10 years.
5. The Department policy is to employ contractors for fixed-term role specific tasks. This is reflected by 175 (84.5%) of the contracted workforce having been under contract for less than 2 years.

Sometimes it is necessary to retain contractors on a long-term basis where their knowledge or skills are scarce in the labour market. For example, in ensuring the ongoing maintenance of very old legacy systems.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 5

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Contractors

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HUMPHRIES asked:

1. How many contractors are currently employed in the department/agency?
2. How many contractors have been under contract for a period of more than 2 years?
3. How many contractors have been under contract for a period of more than 5 years?
4. How many contractors have been under contract for a period of more than 10 years?
5. Does the department/agency make a habit of employing contractors to fill positions on a permanent basis?

Answer

As at 15 February 2012:

1. A total of 207 contractors are currently employed.
2. 14 contractors had been employed for a period of between 2 and 5 years.
3. 10 contractors had been employed for a period of between 5 and 10 years.
4. 9 contractors had been employed for a period of more than 10 years.
5. The Department policy is to employ contractors for fixed-term role specific tasks. This is reflected by 174 (84%) of the contracted workforce having been under contract for less than 2 years.

Sometimes it is necessary to retain contractors on a long-term basis where their knowledge or skills are scarce in the labour market. For example, in ensuring the ongoing maintenance of very old legacy IT systems.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 6

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Efficiency Dividend

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator HUMPHRIES asked:

1. What is the effect of the efficiency dividend increase from 1.5 percent to 4 percent on the department/agency's budget bottom line during financial years 2012/13, 13/14, 14/15?
2. What percentage of the department/agency's budget is designated to staffing?
3. What is the size of the department/agency's staffing establishment? Include figures for FTE, PT, casual, contractors and consultants.
4. What specific strategies will the department/agency adopt to ensure continued operation within budget?
5. Will or has consideration been made to reducing staffing complement including contractors, and consultants?

Answer

1. The impact of the Efficiency Dividend increase on DVA's budget bottom line.

Financial year	2012-13 \$m	2013-14 \$m	2014-15 \$m
Efficiency Dividend rate increase from 1.5% to 4%	7.230	7.301	7.384

2. For the 2010-11 Financial Year DVA recorded total expenditure of \$312m of which 57.6% related to staffing.
3. At 15 February 2012, actual DVA employees totalled 2,070 (refer to Question on Notice 3 answer: Table 3.1). This equates to an FTE total of 1,998.7. This figure includes 215 staff who work part time hours and zero casual staff.

For number of contractors currently employed in the Department refer to answer Question on Notice 5. Contractors are not included in the figure for actual DVA employees.

Details of the number of consultancies are available in the Department's Annual Report 2010-11 (pages 56-57).

4 and 5

Please refer to evidence provided by the Secretary of DVA at the 15 February 2012 Hearings (Proof Committee Hansard pages 101 and 102).

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 7

Outcome 1: Program 1.4

Topic: DVA Funded ESO Advocacy and Welfare Services Final Report

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 89 & 90)

Senator WRIGHT asked:

Senator WRIGHT: Did every ex-service organisations involved in the BEST program submit figures to the department to be considered as part of the 2010 report?

Ms Stevenson: No, they did not.

Senator WRIGHT: Which ESOs did submit figures?

Ms Stevenson: By figures, do you mean their actual workload?

Senator WRIGHT: Yes, in terms of the review.

Ms Stevenson: None were formally invited to do so and none that I can recall provided that information. I can check the information we gathered during the consultations around the country, but they were not part of the report or part of the information provided to the independent review team.

Senator WRIGHT: Please take that on notice and check how you went about that, whether or not they were invited and how you ascertained figures for the ESOs involved in it, whether you had figures for some and not for others.

Ms Stevenson: I can advise tonight that the review team did produce a number of tables and graphs taken from departmental data, not by ex-service organisation or BEST grant recipients by recipient. However, they did provide a range of tables on where the clients were populated across the country, where the concentrations of veterans were, where the concentrations of veterans centres were by local government area. Quite a significant amount of information was made available during the consultations and at the end of each round of consultations, and much of that material was published on the website as part of the report when it was made available in February 2011.

Senator WRIGHT: Am I correct in understanding what you are saying is that it was based on population?

Ms Stevenson: Population and workloads, that information was there. It was made available to ex-service organisations for their review. But it is not down to the level you have asked for.

Answer

During the course of the Review of Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)-funded Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) Advocacy and Welfare Services, the following data were obtained for analysis:

- Claims data – two years worth of claims data for disability pension under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA), and Permanent Impairment under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRCA) from the DVA client database for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 financial years based on the decision date (regardless of the decision).
- Veterans' Review Board (VRB) data relating to numbers of VEA and MRCA applications lodged, and numbers of VEA and MRCA claims finalised were collected from the VRB database and the VRB annual reports from 2004-05 to 2008-09.

- Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) data – numbers of VEA, MRCA and SRCA applications lodged and finalised were collected from AAT annual reports from 2004-05 to 2008-09.

Claims data was not sought from ESOs. Of the 133 submissions received about the Discussion Paper, only two included any workload statistics. The Final Report of the Review of DVA-funded ESO Advocacy and Welfare Services contains further details about the consultation process of the Review and various tables and charts containing data collected. It was published on the DVA website when it was made publicly available in February 2011 and is still available on the website.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 8

Outcome 2: Program 1.4

Topic: BEST New Funding Arrangements

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 90)

Senator WRIGHT asked:

Are there any organisations that experienced an increase in claims in the past one or two years?

1. If there are, are any receiving more funding under the BEST program in order to respond to the increase in claims or their funding has been cut under the funding arrangements that took effect on 1 July 2011.
2. Finally, what proportion of claims are being handled by volunteers working for ex-service organisations compared with the proportion of claims that are being handled by paid employees?

Answer

1. Around a third of the 192 organisations funded in BEST Round 13 (ie in 2011-12) provided claims data in their application that was higher than the claims data provided in their applications for the previous round. Of these organisations some received more funding than in the previous round and some less. This is because BEST funding has never been based solely on claims statistics. A range of factors such as ESO needs in any given round, their welfare work, their cost structure, capital equipment needs and demographics are also taken into account.

Therefore, for those who received an increase - as for those who received a lesser amount – the variation was not necessarily specifically because of their claims workload.

2. We are unable to provide these details. In previous years we have collected specific claims data and hours worked for paid practitioners, but not specific data on the number of volunteers processing claims and the hours worked. The application form has been updated for the next funding round to include the provision for more specific information about the workload and claims statistics for volunteers.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 9

Outcome 1: Program 1.4

Topic: Provision of Gold Cards to all Defence Personnel Participants in BNT in Australia
(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 103 & 104)

Senator LUDLAM asked:

Do you agree that these figures effectively represent unmet need and that, if they are not brought into the gold card system, these veterans and their families and dependents will be paying these costs? Do we think that is appropriate? Is (the provision of Gold Cards) under active consideration for the 2012/13 Budget?

Answer

Assuming that those who would be eligible have come forward, there are no unmet needs.

All service people, including those with British Nuclear Tests (BNT) defence service, are eligible to receive health care for their disabilities or health conditions that have been accepted as due to their service. This includes:

- Health care through the Gold Card for those whose service related conditions are assessed at 100% of the general rate or higher;
- Health care through the Gold Card for those who receive any amount of service pension (due to other periods of qualifying service) and also receive a disability pension of at least 50% of the general rate;
- Health care through the White Card for those whose service related conditions are assessed at less than 100%.

Ex-defence personnel who have rendered BNT defence service are also provided with treatment if diagnosed with the following conditions, irrespective of a service link:

- malignant cancer;
- pulmonary tuberculosis;
- post-traumatic stress disorder;
- anxiety; and
- depression.

Furthermore, under the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006* BNT participants can claim for non-liability health care for the screening and treatment of any cancers.

It is important to note that a Gold Card provides treatment for all health conditions (including those that are not service-related). A core principle of the Repatriation system is that qualifying service status is reserved for individuals who incurred danger from the enemy, and veterans who have rendered this type of service and are over the age of 70 are automatically eligible for the Gold Card.

There are no plans to widen automatic eligibility for the Gold Card to include former Defence personnel who have BNT defence service.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 10

Outcome 2: Program 1.4

Topic: BEST Funding Grants

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 109)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON:Can I now go to the BEST funding issue. Mr Farrelly, are you aware of the dramatic financial situation facing a number of centres in Victoria in particular but not exclusively as a result of the slashing of the BEST funding grants?

Mr Farrelly: We are aware of three centres that are talking about closure. One is the Ballarat RSL. There is another in Central Queensland and another in South Australia. The latter two have been talking about their sustainability for some three or four years. So there are three that we know of that are talking of closing. None have closed yet.

Senator RONALDSON: I do not think that is necessarily an indication that the reduction in funding is not an issue, Mr Farrelly, and I am sure that you were not suggesting that. Have you got a list of centres or organisations that have written to you complaining about the slashing of funds and the potential impact on the services they provide?

Mr Farrelly: A number of organisations have written to us, yes.

Senator RONALDSON: Will you table those, please.

Mr Farrelly: I do not have them here, but we could—

Answer

The following table lists those organisations which have written letters/emails as a result of the reduction in BEST funding.

Service Centre/ESO
Victoria
Central Victorian Veterans Support Centre
Wimmera Veterans Centre
Centres in the Mildura, Horsham and Swan Hill area
Surf Coast Regional Veterans' Centre
Southern Peninsula Veterans' Centre
Swan Hill and Districts Veterans' Information Centre
Geelong Veterans' Welfare Centre
Gippsland Welfare Centre
West Gippsland Veteran Welfare Centre
Ballarat Veterans' Support Centre
Western Suburbs Veterans' Services and Welfare Centre
Vietnam Veterans' Association Australia – Victorian Branch
Bendigo Legacy Club
Melbourne Veterans and Services Support Centre
Defence Force Welfare Association Victorian Branch
Victorian State RSL on behalf of sponsored ESOs in Victoria
Funding to Victorian Centres

Legacy Australia Council
RSL Victoria
New South Wales
Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans and Associated Forces
Newcastle and Hunter Region Vietnam Veterans Inc
Blue Mountains Legacy
Legacy and Veterans' Advisory Service
Armidale RSL Sub-branch
Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association
Queensland
Oakey RSL Sub-branch
Townsville RSL Sub-branch
Southport RSL Sub-branch
Western Australia
Defence Force Welfare Association WA Branch
Australian Capital Territory
Vietnam Veterans Federation ACT

This list includes letters written on behalf of the organisations listed.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 11

Outcome 1: Program 1.4

Topic: Advocacy Funding

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Will the Department provide a breakdown of the total value and number of funding requests for BEST funding received in each round since 2005-06? Will the Department provide a list of organisations, which have requested funds, the amount requested and the amount paid under the Grant?

Answer

- a) The figures for number of applications received and total funding requested and approved for the periods 2005-06 to 2011-12 are shown below:

Financial Year	Applications Received	Requested (\$m) (GST incl)	Approved (\$m) (GST excl)
2005-06 (Round7)	181	4.9	3.5
2006-07 (Round 8)	206	6.5	3.5
2007-08 (Round 9)	211	6.6	3.6
2008-09 (Round 10)	249	7.4	4.1
2009-10 (Round 11)	281	9.9	4.0
2010-11 (Round 12)	231	8.0	4.2
2011-12 (Round 13)	220	7.3	3.5

- b) A table showing all applicants for Rounds 11-13, the requested amounts and the amounts paid is attached. Equivalent details for Rounds 7-10 have not been provided as full electronic data capture was not in place prior to Round 11. The time and effort involved to accurately provide this information would be too resource intensive.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 12

Outcome 1: Program 1.4

Topic: BEST Transition Funding

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 110)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: On page 29 of the portfolio additional estimates statements it says the payments to ESO in 2012 will be greater than last year. But my reading of all these figures is that the increase in funding is actually transferred funds from last year. Mr Rochow, is that right?

Mr Rochow: That is correct. There was a carryover of funds of \$1.5 million.

Senator RONALDSON: We are now rapidly approaching the May budget. Where has that \$1.5 million been spent or paid to?

Mr Farrelly: Last estimates we talked of a transition fund. That is the \$1.5 million that you are referring to, and \$800,000 was allocated to ESOs on top of the allocation they got through the \$2.67 million. The balance is being used for integration grants, which we can give you an update on if you like.

Senator RONALDSON: What is the balance figure?

Mr Farrelly: \$700,000

Senator RONALDSON: That was originally going to be \$900,000, wasn't it?

Mr Farrelly: No.

Senator RONALDSON: I might be terribly wrong but I thought the integrated centres spend was going to be \$900,000. Am I mistaken?

Mr Farrelly: I can take that on notice.

Answer

The Government has provided for a one-off \$1.5 million Transition Fund to assist ESOs with the realignment process.

\$800,000 of this fund has already been provided directly to ESOs across the country in BEST Round 13.

The remaining \$700,000 is available to fund Feasibility Studies and implementation assistance to ESOs seeking to deliver services that are more efficient, sustainable and flexible into the future.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 13

Outcome 1: Program 1.4

Topic: Defective Administration Payments

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 112)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: Under program 1.4, for defective administration payments, the PAES¹ shows a \$590,000 increase in expected expenditure for defective administration. What is the explanation for that? I note that in 2010-11 the actual amount was \$109,000, down from an anticipated \$249,000. So why the dramatic increase?

Ms Spiers: I do not have information before me that could specifically address the increase. I have got overall numbers of cases that have been determined, and there has been a level of consistency in terms of the numbers so I would speculate to say obviously the difference here is the value of the individual claims. If I can take it on notice I will clarify it for you further.

Answer

The estimate for the Scheme for Compensation for Detriment Caused by Defective Administration (CDDA Scheme) in the PAES for 2011-12 is \$663,000. This is a \$554,000 increase from the actual expenditure for this scheme for 2010-11.

Defective administration can be caused by a number of different factors ranging from the type of advice provided, the assessment of the rate of pension or allowance, or determining the eligibility of a benefit. The value and number of payments made under the Scheme varies from year to year depending on the specific issue.

The estimate of \$663,000 comprises:

- \$171,278 relates to CDDA payments that have either been offered or received by seven people (as at 29 February 2012);
- \$225,000 relates to a determination of two other CDDA matters where the value of the CDDA amounts fully offsets the value of debts that had been raised against these pensioners. Although this did not result in CDDA payments to the two pensioners, it did result in \$225,000 in reportable CDDA amounts; and
- \$266,722 being the balance of this estimate which is the potential value of a further six cases that are subject to investigation and likely to result in a determination of defective administration.

¹ Portfolio Additional Estimates Statement

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 14

Outcome 14: Program 1.4

Topic: Defective Administration Payments

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

In addition to the matters already taken on notice, will the Department provide a breakdown of payments made under the Defective Administration programme since 2005-06?

Answer

The payments made under the *Scheme for Compensation for Detriment Caused by Defective Administration* (CDDA Scheme) from 2005-06 are as follows (all figures are rounded to the nearest dollar):

Table 1. CDDA Scheme payments 2005-06 to 2010-11

Financial Year	No of Payees	Total of payments
2005-06	7	\$35,344
2006-07	8	\$42,548
2007-08	19	\$382,452
2008-09	5	\$56,761
2009-10	11	\$103,449
2010-11	14	\$108,987
2011-12 (to 29 February 2012)	7	\$130,254

The 2007-08 total payment reflect an unusual year regarding the number of payees and value of payments under the CDDA scheme. A 2003 investigation had detected an anomaly with the departmental processing of those entitled to special rate pension on the basis of blindness and any consequential advice about access to a non income tested service pension.

The investigation resulted in seven special rate pensioners receiving significant back payments of service pension totalling \$262,391. Changes were also made to the departmental instructions to ensure future cases were correctly advised of the availability of non-income tested service pension.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 15

Outcome 1: Program 1.4

Topic: Maralinga Victims Access to Gold Cards

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator XENOPHON asked:

Has there been any further action on the issue of providing Maralinga veterans access to the Gold card?

- a) Is the Government planning a review in the near future?
- b) Does the Government understand that time is of the essence here?

Answer

a) In keeping with its 2007 election commitment, the Government reconsidered the 2003 Review of Veterans' Entitlements (the Clarke Review) recommendation that participation in British nuclear tests be considered equivalent to non-warlike hazardous service under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA).

As a result of the Government's acceptance of this recommendation, Australian defence participants of the British Nuclear Tests (BNT) program have had access to compensation and health care treatment under the VEA from 1 July 2010 for conditions accepted as caused by BNT defence service. Additional allowances and benefits may also be payable, depending on individual circumstances.

Individuals, whether former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members or civilians, also have access to compensation benefits under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* or the SRCA-like scheme. In addition, under the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006* BNT participants can claim for non-liability health care for the screening and treatment of any cancers.

The Government is satisfied that Australian participants of British nuclear testing have fair and adequate compensation and health care treatment available under the existing schemes and the non-liability health care scheme and that this is equitable in the broader context of Australian military compensation arrangements.

The Government is not planning a review.

b) The Government is aware that BNT participants are elderly. Since the commencement of the BNT program in Australia in 1952, tests participants and affected personnel have had access to various Australian statutory compensation, administrative schemes and other benefits. Australian BNT participants have also had access to non-liability health care testing and treatment for any malignant cancer, irrespective of a service link, since 2006.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 16

Outcome 1: Program 1.4

Topic: Maralinga Victims Access to Gold Cards

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator XENOPHON asked:

Has the Government been in communication with the British Government on this subject?

- a) Has the British Government indicated that they [*sic*] will be providing any further compensation?
- b) Has the Australian Government ever been able to account for the compensation already paid by the British Government, which was never passed on to victims?
- c) Has the British Government accepted the Government's explanation?

Answer

The Government has not been in communication with the UK Government concerning the treatment of Australian participants in the British Nuclear Tests (BNT) program.

- a) The UK Government has not indicated that it will be providing any further compensation. A group of 1,011 BNT claimants in the UK lodged claims for compensation, mostly in 2004.

The issue revolved around whether the claimants were time-barred under the UK *Limitations Act 1980*. The final avenue of appeal, the UK Supreme Court, handed down its judgement on 14 March 2012. The decision upheld a previous decision that the claimants were time-barred under the provisions of the *Limitations Act 1980* from lodging claims for compensation. The court found that each of the nine lead applicants reasonably believed that their injuries could be attributed to the nuclear tests prior to three years before issue of their claims. The court also held that the BNT veterans had great difficulty in establishing causation.

- b) In 1993 the Australian and UK Governments reached agreement on Australia's claims concerning the former British nuclear test sites in Australia. The Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism has advised that the £20 million payment was made in response to representations by the Australian Government in 1991 for a substantial UK Government contribution to the \$101 million cost of implementing the Australian Government's preferred option for rehabilitation of Maralinga and Emu test sites. The £20 million was approximately half the clean-up cost.

The 1993 agreement with the UK represented an *ex gratia* settlement of Australia's claims so the purpose of the payments was not specified. However, the settlement was clearly reached in the context of December 1991 negotiations between officials, June 1993 negotiations between Ministers and correspondence between Heads of Government concerning Britain's liability to contribute to the cost of clean-up.

Liability for compensation claims by test participants was not part of these negotiations. This is not surprising considering that under the 1956 Memorandum of Arrangements between Australian and the UK concerning use of the Maralinga test site each country accepted responsibility for compensation claims from its test participants.

As outlined in the answer to Questions on Notice 9 and 15, Australian BNT participants have access to compensation and health care under a number of Acts.

c) As outlined in b) above, the UK Government was aware that the £20 million would be used for the rehabilitation of nuclear test sites.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 17 and 18

Outcome 2: Program 2.1

Topic: Funding of Services by Dental Hygienists

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 118) also (Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON:Can I just briefly, please, go back to the dental hygienist issue. I do not think I actually got an answer from the advice given in *Truce* as to when the department released that advice. Could you take that on notice for me, please.

Mr Campbell: We will do so.

When did the Department of Veterans' Affairs first become aware of the DHS Audit of dental services? When was advice which was printed in the *Truce* magazine released and to which other organisations was it released?

Answer

The Department was first aware of the DHS audit in November 2011, through correspondence received from the Australian Dental Association (ADA).

The advice which was printed in the *Truce* magazine was based on interim advice provided by the relevant policy area of the Department to the Department's Deputy Commissioners and frontline service delivery areas on 1 February 2012.

The issuing of this interim advice was prompted by queries to the South Australian Deputy Commissioner's office reporting that veterans were being advised by their dentists that Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) would no longer fund preventive services provided by dental hygienists.

At the same time, the Department urgently progressed meetings with both the ADA and the Dental Hygienists Association of Australia to discuss the issue prompted by the recent DHS audit, which was communicated to the dental industry in January 2012. These discussions clarified for the ADA that the existing technical wording of the DVA's Treatment Principles were an issue in allowing continued veteran access to preventive services provided by dental hygienists under the supervision of their dentist.

Recognising this issue was impacting veteran access to important preventive dental services, on 8 February 2012, the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission determined that services provided by dental hygienists under the direction of a dentist or dental specialist can continue for veteran patients and be claimed under DVA's current schedule arrangements. This determination was made under subsection 84(3) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* and subsection 287(2) of *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 19

Outcome 2: Program 2.3

Topic: Veteran Pharmaceutical Reimbursement Scheme

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 114)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: Perhaps I could turn to the Veterans Pharmaceutical Reimbursement Scheme, which I understand has been enacted effectively through regulation. I find that interesting, and I presume you have had some legal advice to do that by way of regulation. If you have that I would be grateful to receive it, please, if you could take that on notice.

Answer

In response to Question on Notice 3 of the Budget Supplementary Estimates 2010-2011 – October 2010, the Department advised the Minister that the Pharmaceutical Reimbursement Scheme would be implemented by amending the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* and the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*. That advice was correct at the time of providing it to the Minister.

As part of the implementation of this initiative, the business area and legal areas of the Department clarified the detail of this initiative. Legal advice was obtained on establishing the Veterans Pharmaceutical Reimbursement Scheme. This advice confirmed that the scope of section 91 of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* and section 286 of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* were sufficient to encompass the changes required for this program and instruments were prepared accordingly.

It is not the practice of this Department to release copies of its legal advice. A separate verbal briefing can be provided if requested.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 20

Outcome 2: Program 2.4

Topic: Tele-monitoring Initiative

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 113)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: I want to ask some questions about the health telemonitoring initiative. I am happy for this to be taken on notice. The minister said in his statement:

Overseas experience has shown that telemonitoring can have significant health benefits for those involved, including more responsive management of chronic conditions.

Would you take on notice which countries, do they have similar NBN-style internet provider relationships, have they been used for veterans specifically or has it been across a different demographic, and can any additional information be provided on notice. I presume that all this is premised on the NBN providing a reliable, high-speed and high-capacity service—is that right? That is what underpins the delivery?

Ms Daniel: The technology that will underpin the telemonitoring initiative is linked to the NBN rollout. In terms of your question about overseas experience, we will take that on notice so that we can comprehensively respond.

Senator RONALDSON: But part of the NBN aspect of this is providing a reliable high-speed and high-capacity service. That was in the minister's statement, so that must underpin the delivery. What are you going to do when, some would say cynically, the inevitable happens and we actually do not have a reliable high-speed and high-capacity service? When you look at the roll-out of the NBN and the appalling amount of money that has been spent to deliver very few connections, what gives you any confidence, in light of what you have said, that you will be able to deliver this to the 300 veterans—

Senator Feeney: That is not a question for the officers. You are inviting an official to speculate on a world of policy that is a long way from DVA.

Senator RONALDSON: I am sure the point has been made. Does the department cover the internet costs during the trial?

Ms Daniel: The costs associated with the service are part of the funding we have for the trial.

Senator RONALDSON: So the answer is yes. Do you undertake to pay the internet connection and usage costs of people who take this up after the trial?

Ms Daniel: An important part of the trial, the pilot, is obviously assessing what might be a long-term model for such a service but that will be part of the lesson we can gain from the trial. Before the trial I do not think I can speculate on that.

Senator RONALDSON: So there is a possibility that they will not be paid, and there is a possibility, presumably, that they will be paid—but you cannot guarantee that they will be, can you?

Ms Daniel: The pilot is there to explore those sorts of questions.

Senator RONALDSON: But you cannot guarantee, can you, that they going to be paid?

Ms Daniel: No.

Answer

The Department has sought input from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) to answer this NBN-specific question regarding broadband networks overseas.

DBCDE advise that the National Broadband Network (NBN) is a new high-speed broadband network comprising three technologies – optic fibre, fixed wireless and satellite – which will provide high-speed broadband access to all Australian premises.

The NBN will be Australia's first national wholesale-only, open access, high-speed broadband network. This means NBN Co will roll out the network and sell wholesale services to service providers, such as internet or phone provider. In turn, service providers can offer retail services to consumers.

Singapore is the only other comparable fibre broadband investment model that aims to provide broadband services to over 99 per cent of their population in what is a small densely populated island nation.

Of interest, the European Commission recently proposed to spend almost €9.2 billion from 2014 to 2020 on projects to give European Citizens and businesses access to high-speed broadband networks and the services that run on them. At least €7 billion in grants would be available for investment in high-speed broadband infrastructure. The remaining funding would support public interest digital service infrastructure such as electronic health records, electronic identification and electronic procurement. For example, in the area of health care, high speed connections (over 50Mbps per second) allow remote diagnostic examinations. This makes it possible to offer the world's best diagnostics to a patient wherever they are in the EU, and to ensure always-on remote back-up to health professionals looking after frail or ill people living at home.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 21

Outcome 2: Program 2.4

Topic: Tele-monitoring Initiative

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

In addition to the matters already taken on notice about 'overseas examples' of tele-monitoring, can the Department advise which countries have trialled such a programme, whether the internet infrastructure arrangement is similar in scope to the National Broadband Network, whether the international examples have been veteran-specific as well as any other useful information relevant to the discussion.

Answer

Research conducted overseas (refer to Table 1), indicates reductions in emergency presentations, hospital admissions and bed days under telehealth trials and initiatives from 2001 to 2008. Most research focused on an older demographic with some studies being veteran specific, however all focused on chronic conditions.

Table 1 – Overseas Telemonitoring Research

Study	Country study conducted	Veteran/Non-Veteran
Barnett et al (2006)	USA	Veterans
Britton & Hoggard (2008)	USA	Non-Veteran
Brookes (2005)	USA	Non-Veteran
Cherry et al (2002)	USA	Non-Veteran
Darkins et al (2008)	USA	Veterans
Huddleston & Kobb (2004)	USA	Veterans
Jerant et al (2001)	USA	Non-Veteran
Litan (2008)	USA	Non-Veteran
Meyer et al (2002)	USA	Veteran
Noel et al (2004)	USA	Veteran
Nabeel A. Al-Qirim (2003)	New Zealand	Non-Veteran

- In Darkins et al (2008), a '...cohort of patients had a reduction in hospital admissions and reduction in bed days of care following enrolment.'
- In Meyer et al (2002), '...gains included a reduction in emergency room visits, a reduction in hospital admissions, and a reduction in hospital bed days of care, along with similar reductions in nursing home care.'
- In Litan (2008), suggested that 'care coordination is complementary to telemonitoring, and some of the most successful telemonitoring demonstration programs (both in terms of clinical outcomes and physician and nurse buy-in) are centred on chronic-disease management programs.'

These studies were not able to take advantage of an NBN style high-speed broadband network and a number of the studies identified the underlying internet network as having a significant impact on effectiveness of the trials.

- In Nabeel A. Al-Qirim (2003) ‘...technological problems proved frustrating as the (Tele-Monitoring Video Conferencing Equipment) TMVC encountered lots of blackouts due to an unreliable ISDN connection and related peripherals (the TMVC equipment). This resulted in the cancellation of several TMVC consultations.’
- In Litan (2008) documented that ‘...nearly 25 per cent of video visits were unsuccessful for technical reasons’ (page 23) leading to conclusions that:
 - ‘...certain telemedicine applications require dedicated and reliable connections, above and beyond those supplied by standard broadband connections.’ (page 18)
 - ‘The critical and personal nature of the health data involved in remote monitoring calls for network infrastructure that allows for extremely reliable and secure transmission of patient communications and data.’ (page 50-51)

The studies were conducted from 2002 to 2008, and used either direct phone line (dial up) connections or broadband connections that were available at the time.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 22

Outcome 2: Program 2.4

Topic: Tele-monitoring Initiative

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Other than being part of the CVC programme, what additional eligibility requirements are there for a veteran to access this programme? Will DVA meet the costs of connecting the veterans' property to the NBN? If so, has NBN given an indication that all trial-participants will be connected by the 1 July 2012 start date?

Answer

22.1 Eligibility Requirements for Telemonitoring trial

Eligibility requirements for Gold Card holders to access this trial must include having one or more of the following chronic conditions:

- Congestive Heart Failure,
- Coronary Artery Disease,
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary disease,
- Diabetes,

and residing in a DVA specified NBN rollout footprint.

Exclusions include Gold Card holders who are in aged care residences, those in palliative care, or those participating in any of the following Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) programs:

- Extended Aged Care At Home
- Community Aged Care package
- Transition Care or similar program.

Additionally, Gold Card holders diagnosed with a condition that in the opinion of their GP may hinder participation in the trial, e.g. dementia, will be out of scope.

DVA and GPs will agree on selection of Gold Card holder participants based on the criteria above.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 23

Outcome 2: Program 2.4

Topic: Tele-monitoring Initiative

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Will the Department meet the costs of connecting the General Practitioners (GP) practice to the National Broadband Network (NBN)? If not, will the GP be able to claim costs of treating veterans to the Department? If yes, what mechanisms are in place to ensure ease of claiming by the GP?

Answer

The trial will include funding for participating general practices and GPs. This funding is in the form of an incentive payment to participating practices and funding to GPs for each enrolled veteran participant. This is in addition to standard fee for service arrangements for treatment.

The trial is not funding the costs of connecting participating general practices to the NBN.

GPs participating in the trial will also be able to access currently available Federal Government funding for technology, in particular, video conferencing equipment, such as through the *Connecting Health Services with the Future – Telehealth Onboard Incentive*.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 24

Outcome 2: Program 2.4

Topic: VCES State Boards

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 115 & 116)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: Parliamentary secretary, I acknowledge that I have not been involved in this portfolio for long—it is getting on towards a year and a half or a couple of years; I cannot remember. In that period of time, the clear message to me from the veteran community is that they do not like this arrangement under which they are potentially accessing multiple agencies. There is an enormous amount of angst in the veteran community when you potentially start moving things—which this will—out of the Department of Veterans' Affairs into other agencies. That move will take place as a result of DVA writing to clients suggesting that they do that. When is the message going to get through that dealing with multiple agencies caused enormous angst—and in my view quite rightly? When will the message get through? Why wasn't this on the web site on the VCES fact sheet dated November 2011? If it was there, for example, that would have given people the chance to apply to Centrelink. Is it right that that the Veterans' Children Education Scheme state boards were not advised that DVA would be writing to clients to tell them to contact Centrelink? If so, why didn't that happen?

Mr Farrelly: I will take that on notice.

Answer

The Education Schemes factsheet (MRC47) mentions the availability of the FTB A payment from Centrelink. However, it was not considered appropriate to encourage students to change payments as receipt of FTB A is dependent on family income. VCES payments are fundamentally different to FTB payments and DVA does not provide details of other agencies' payments in its factsheets.

When the Education Boards last met in November and December 2011, they were advised of the FTB A changes by the Secretaries of each Board. The Secretaries have been kept up to date while the Department was considering options. They were also consulted in the drafting of the letters that were sent to students and families advising of their choice to transfer to FTB in the week commencing 16 January 2012.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 25

Outcome: 2 Program 2.4

Topic: VCES and the FTB Bill

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 118)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: Thank you. I appreciate, Parliamentary Secretary, that you cannot comment on other departments, but in the second reading speech in relation to this FTB bill and the increased amount—I think it was the increased amount—the minister said:

The government recognises that families with older teenage children can face higher costs. The cost of groceries, clothes and family activities can all increase as children grow.

She went on:

Research shows that children from low-income families have lower levels of school completion. For example, in 2006, year 12 completion rates were at 59 per cent for low-income students compared with 78 per cent for higher income students.

These findings indicate that the costs of educating teenage children are an important barrier for families on low incomes to support their child's education.

Parliamentary Secretary, why has the government not increased the VCES payments to mirror changes to the family tax benefit part A allowance to make it easier for veterans to get the assistance they need to educate their children, and is there not a very real risk that, by referring people from the department to Centrelink, there will be X number of people who are not able to find their way through the maze, and they are the very people who need the support that the VCES provides?

Senator Feeney: Senator, your point is noted, and I assure you I will raise it with the minister. Should I be advising the minister that you yourself, from opposition, are making a funding commitment in this area?

Answer

The Government did not mirror the changes to the Family Tax Benefit Part A (FTB A) payments because payments made by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) under the Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS) are fundamentally different to FTB payments in terms of their policy objectives and design.

Assistance provided under the DVA education schemes includes financial assistance and student support services, such as additional tuition, guidance and counselling, to help eligible children achieve their full potential in education or career training in recognition of the special status of these children. However, the eligibility criteria for DVA education payments takes into account the severity of the parent's service related medical conditions and recognises that such children may be more vulnerable than others. DVA education payments are aligned with the Youth Allowance payment provided by Centrelink.

In contrast, FTB is designed to help families with the general costs of raising children and is usually paid for dependent children and dependent full-time students under 22 years of age who are not receiving Youth Allowance or other similar payments such as ABSTUDY or a DVA education payment.

The Government did not increase the DVA education assistance payments for similar reasons that it did not increase the Youth Allowance rates. That is there is a higher rate available through the FTB A payment. Many veteran families were already receiving FTB before their child turned 16 and thus could simply remain on this payment because it had been increased.

If the rate of DVA education allowances was increased to equal FTB A, families who are eligible for FTB B would still be better off transferring to Centrelink. This is because the combination of maximum rate FTB A and FTB B would still exceed the DVA education allowance. Like the DVA education allowance, FTB A is paid per child, whereas FTB B is paid per family. Therefore, if the DVA education allowance was increased to the equivalent of the maximum rate of FTB A plus the maximum rate of FTB B, families with multiple children would receive the FTB B equivalent of the payment multiple times. This would not be equitable where FTB B continues to be paid by Centrelink per family.

In order to retain all DVA students without producing an inequitable policy outcome DVA would need to mirror the payments arrangements and means testing arrangements for both FTB A and FTB B under its education schemes. This would substantially alter the claim and payment process under these education schemes and this duplication was considered unnecessary by the Government. This is particularly so considering there has been no reduction in benefits available from DVA to students who elect to receive the FTB A payments, including non-financial benefits under the DVA education schemes such as tuition.

While some veteran families may choose to receive their primary family related payment from Centrelink in the future, regardless of the source of their student payment, eligible veteran children will continue to have access to DVA and the Education Boards for advice, guidance and counselling if they need it. The Education Boards will have the details of all these students and will continue to assist them.

Families who choose to receive their payment from Centrelink have the benefit of having their claim processed by a dedicated team at Centrelink (Revesby) who will process the special form developed for these DVA clients. The benefit of this arrangement is that claimants will be advised by Centrelink if their estimated FTB amount will be less than the VCES amount.

Rates for a child 16 or 17 in secondary education and living at home

	Pre 1 January 2012	From 1 January 2012
	Annual Amount	Annual Amount
Maximum FTB A per child	\$1,335.90	\$5,580.85
Maximum FTB A supplement	\$726.35	\$726.35
Total Annual Payment per child	\$2,062.25	\$6,307.20
	Fortnightly Amount	Fortnightly Amount
Equivalent Fortnightly Amount	\$79.10	\$241.92

	Pre 1 January 2012	From 1 January 2012
Maximum FTB B per family	\$2,898.10	\$2,898.10
Maximum FTB B supplement	\$354.05	\$354.05
Total Annual Payment per family	\$3,252.15	\$3,252.15
	Fortnightly Amount	Fortnightly Amount
Equivalent Fortnightly Amount	\$124.74	\$124.74

	Fortnightly Amount	Fortnightly Amount
VCES & MRCAETS	\$212.70	\$220.40
	Annual Amount	Annual Amount
	\$5,530.20	\$5,730.40

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 26

Outcome 2: Program 2.4

Topic: VCES

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

As at 1 January 2012, how many children eligible under the Veterans' Children's Education Scheme were aged 16 and over? How many children will turn 16 this year? If possible, please provide an age breakdown of students eligible under the scheme, as at 1 January 2012.

Answer

- a) The most recent data available is from 24 February 2012. As at 24 February 2012 there were 1305 Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) students aged 16 to 29 years of age, and 9 students under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Education Training Scheme (MRCAETS).
- b) There are 270 current VCES students, and 6 MRCAETS students, who were born in 1996 and who would therefore turn 16 in 2012.
- c) Students in receipt of VCES or MRCAETS as at 24 February 2012 and their ages are shown in the attached table (Attachment A).

ATTACHMENT A

Students in Receipt of VCES or MRCAETS as at 24 February 2012

AGE	VCES	MRCAETS
4	3	0
5	23	0
6	50	3
7	72	2
8	78	1
9	101	1
10	110	2
11	130	4
12	136	5
13	182	6
14	250	3
15	295	4
16	237	3
17	231	1
18	167	1
19	140	1
20	138	2
21	114	1
22	105	0
23	63	0
24	54	0
25	31	0
26	15	0
27	6	0
28	3	0
29	1	0
TOTAL	2735	40

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 27

Outcome 2: Program 2.5

Topic: VVCS Underspend

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 109)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: Looking at these various historical budget papers it would appear that VVCS constantly underspends on its budget amounts. So I presume an extension to these groups would not be a budgetary issue.

Mr Carmody: It actually depends on the nature of the extension and the coverage of the groups. I could not say generally. It would depend on how many veterans or dependants or others came into the eligibility cycle and the estimates for how long they would remain in that cycle.

Senator RONALDSON: Can you provide me on notice with the underspend in VVCS over the last four or five years, with budget figures, revised figures and actual figures, please.

Mr Carmody: Certainly.

Senator RONALDSON: Am I right that there is a regular underspend in the service?

Mr Penniall: The underspend in VVCS has not been as a result of direct services to clients—in other words, direct counselling, for example. The underspend has been associated with a range of other initiatives. We can certainly provide that on notice.

Senator RONALDSON: Sorry, I do not quite understand. Initiatives usually cost something, not save something.

Mr Carmody: It depends on what the uptake is of the particular initiative. You might make an estimate for a number of clients who would want to access a particular initiative and the access might not reach those expectations. We can provide those figures for you.

Senator RONALDSON: In that situation, where is the underspend saving allocated to? Does it just go into the general department budget? What actually happens to it?

Mr Carmody: It is just carried forward in the appropriation, I believe.

Senator RONALDSON: So it is just carried forward?

Mr Carmody: That is my understanding, but the CFO might be able to add more detail.

Mr Rochow: Generally whatever is left of the annual administered appropriation lapses. So it does not normally carry over; it lapses.

Answer

The Veterans' and Veterans Families' Counselling Service (VVCS) program appropriation contains expenditure for both VVCS counselling, and other mental health initiatives.

Below is the past 5 years budget, including revised and actual figures, for both Special and Annual appropriations.

(1) Special Appropriations

Special Appropriations – Program 2.5 VVCS Counselling				
FY	Budget	Revised	Actual	(Under)/Over revised budget
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	PBS			
2010-11	26,351	23,121	21,552	(1,569)
2009-10	29,917	25,090	19,766	(5,324)
2008-09	22,542	22,368	22,561	193
2007-08	18,001	17,436	16,508	(928)
2006-07	17,734	14,188	12,320	(1,868)

Notes:

In 2009-10 and 2010-11, the underspends identified in the table above were driven by two main factors: client demand being less than anticipated for demand driven programs and there were some delays in implementing a number of initiatives, such as “Improving Access to Preventative and Community Oriented Mental Health Services for the Veteran Community, particularly Younger Veterans”, the “Mental Health Lifecycle Package”, and “Extension of Operation Life”.

(2) Annual Appropriations

Annual Appropriations – Program 2.5 VVCS Counselling Support and Vietnam Veterans Children’s Support Program

FY	Budget	Revised	Actual	(Under)/over revised budget
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	PBS			
2010-11	5,371	544	488	(56)
2009-10	1,001	1,001	474	(527)
2008-09	1,055	976	517	(459)
2007-08	676	1,116	480	(636)
2006-07	414	463	404	(59)

Notes:

In 2009-10 and 2010-11, the underspends identified in the table above were driven by client demand being less than anticipated for demand driven programs. The 2010-11 budget was revised downwards (from \$5.371m to \$0.544m). This primarily related to various programs relating to F-111 clients where there was less than expected demand for these support services.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 28

Outcome 2: Program 2.5

Topic: VVCS Eligibility Review

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

When does the Department expect the review of VVCS Access Eligibility to become available?
Will the findings be released publicly?

Answer

The Department expects to finalise its review of VVCS eligibility by mid 2012. There has been no decision on whether or not the review will be publically released.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to Questions on Notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 29

Outcome 2: Program: Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program

Topic: CVC Enrolment

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

As at 15 February 2012, how many veterans have signed up to participate in the Coordinated Veterans' Care Program? How many veterans in each of the trial locations for the tele-monitoring initiative have signed up for the CVC program?

Answer

As at 15 February 2012, 6,100 DVA Gold Card holders had enrolled in the Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program.

Based on postcode alone, as at 15 February 2012, the following Gold Card holders in the trial locations for tele-monitoring were enrolled in the CVC program:

Armidale, NSW – postcode 2350 – 2

Coffs Harbour, NSW – postcode 2450 – 3

Toowoomba, QLD – postcode 4350 – 116

Mandurah, WA – postcode 6210 – 23

Geraldton, WA – postcode 6530 – 0

Kingston Beach, TAS – postcode 7050 – 1

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 30

Outcome 3: Program 3.1

Topic: Anzac Centenary Planning

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 117)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Major Gen. Cosson: I will talk to the commemorative research. Colmar Brunton undertook the social research to inform the commission's report, which identified a range of key themes that Australians would like to see in our commemorative period. It particularly identified that they wanted to make sure that we focused on education, community awareness and that we could touch all Australians to help them gain a better appreciation of our history as Australians—some actually expressed some embarrassment that they did not really have a good understanding of our history—but also where we should concentrate on mobile exhibitions to go out, as I mentioned, to engage communities around Australia. So the social research actually informed a lot of the recommendations that sit within the commission's report.

Senator RONALDSON: What consultation has taken place with the ex-service community? What has been the nature and extent of that?

Major Gen. Cosson: I have certainly briefed at ESO roundtables and the operational working party that I chair, and I have briefed at PMAC, and RSL has been briefed in relation to—

Senator RONALDSON: Can you take on notice for me all consultation with the ex-service community in relation to these matters.

Major Gen. Cosson: Certainly.

Answer

Over the last 16 months and across 13 separate meetings, there has been extensive consultation with the Ex-Service Community in relation to the planning and commemoration of the Anzac Centenary. Consultation will continue with standing agenda items listed on future meetings of the ESO Round Table (ESO RT), Operational Working Party (OWP) and Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Ex-Service Matters (PMAC).

ESO RT

Membership of the ESO RT comprises of National Presidents of 14 major ESOs listed below:

- Australian Federation of Totally & Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen & Women
- Australian Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Veterans' Association
- Australian Veterans & Defence Services Council
- Defence Force Welfare Association
- Legacy Co-ordinating Council
- Partners of Veterans Association
- Returned & Services League of Australia
- Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia

- Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia
- Naval Association of Australia
- Royal Australian Air Force Association
- Royal Australian Regiment Association
- Australian Special Air Service Association
- War Widows' Guild of Australia

Consultation on the below items were discussed at the following ESO RT meetings:

- Meeting 6 - 22 November 2010
Centenary of Anzac and Centenary of Anzac Commission
- Meeting 8 - 3 March 2011
Draft report of the Centenary of Anzac
- Meeting 10 - 12 April 2011
Centenary of Anzac
- Meeting 11 - 10 May 2011
Commemoration of the ANZAC Centenary
- Meeting 13 - 29 July 2012
Centenary of Anzac
- Meeting 14 - 24 November 2011
Anzac Centenary Advisory Board and Anzac Centenary Motif
- Meeting 17 -21 March 2012
Commemorative update including Anzac Centenary Advisory Board

OWP

Membership of the OWP comprises representatives from the following organisations:

- Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women
- Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association Inc
- Royal Australian Regiment Association
- Legacy
- Returned and Services League of Australia
- Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia
- Australian Special Air Service Association

Consultation with the OWP on the Anzac Centenary Advisory Board occurred at Meeting 7, held on 7 December 2011.

PMAC

Consultation occurred with members of PMAC. Council members are selected on the basis of individual merit, broad experience and understanding of the issues affecting the ex-service and Defence communities and are not appointed as representatives of any organisations.

- Meeting 10 – 24/25 November 2010
Centenary of Anzac
- Meeting 13 – 4/5 July 2011
Centenary of Anzac
- Meeting 14 – 5 September 2011
Minister's request to PMAC to provide comment on the recommendations in the *Report How Australia may commemorate the Anzac Centenary*
- Meeting 15 – 15/16 December 2011
Centenary of Anzac, Enhancing community awareness, Influencing national education and curriculum, Engaging the youth and the multi-cultural sectors of the community
- Meeting 16 – 1/2 March 2012
Anzac Centenary Advisory Board, Group Report

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 31

Outcome 3: Program 3.1

Topic: Anzac Centenary Advisory Board – Remuneration and Expenditure

(FADT Hansard Proof 15 February 2012, p 118)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: Can you please also take on notice how members of the Anzac Centenary Advisory Board are remunerated and what has been spent to date. There is another matter that I might discuss with you privately, in relation to CN450698. I think I will do that outside here.

Answer

The Chair of the Board's remuneration has been agreed between himself and the Government and to date, he has been paid \$58,608 in sitting fees.

There are four ex-officio members of the Board who do not receive remuneration:

- Mr Campbell (Secretary DVA)
- AM Binskin (VCDF)
- RADM Doolan (National President RSL)
- His Excellency MAJGEN Dunne (NZ High Commissioner)

Of the remaining 17 members, 16 remunerated as outlined in Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2011/09. These members are entitled to four days of sitting fees which will be paid by the end of March. This is approximately \$24,108 per annum.

One member (His Honor Judge Rauf Soulio) has declined receipt of a sitting fee to avoid any perception of conflict of interest.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 32

Outcome 3: Program 3.1

Topic: Anzac Centenary Market Research

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Please provide details of all contracts between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and Colmar Brunton which relate to market research for the Centenary of Anzac.

Answer

CONTRACT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	AUSTENDER REFERENCE	CONTRACT VALUE (incl GST)
1	Phase 1 – Conduct social research to inform the report of the National Commission on the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary regarding the views, perceptions, knowledge and aspirations of the Australian people in relation to the Anzac Centenary.	CN469175	\$411,180 Actual Payments: \$369,776
2	Phase 2 – Certain questions emerged from Phase 1 of the research, including the reaction and potential issues for multi-cultural Australia. Phase 2 undertook further research to gain an understanding of the views, perceptions, knowledge and attitudes of Australian people, including specific cultural groups, in relation to the Anzac Centenary.	CN388713 CN394474	\$150,260 Actual Payments: \$150,260
3	Consultation with stakeholders including the general community, veterans and Australian Defence Force members regarding a motif for the Anzac Centenary Program 2014 - 2018.	CN455456 CN455456-A1	\$115,138.10 Actual Payments (to date): \$57,569
4	Brief the recently established Anzac Centenary Working Groups on the findings of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the social research work.	N/A	Up to \$3,025

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 33

Outcome 3: Program 3.1

Topic: Market Research

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Please provide details of all market research contracts between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and contracted providers relating to the Centenary of Anzac.

Answer

Apart from the contracts detailed in the answer to Question on Notice 32, there are no other market research contracts between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and contracted providers relating to the Anzac Centenary.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 34

Outcome All: Program General

Topic: Staffing

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. How many ongoing staff recruited this financial year to date? What classification are these staff?
2. How many non ongoing positions exist or have been created this financial year to date? What classification are these staff?
3. This financial year to date, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

Answer

1. Table 34.1 below has the number of ongoing staff recruited this financial year to 31 January 2012 by classification.

Table 34.1 Numbers of Ongoing recruitments by classification

Ongoing Hires 1/7/2011 to 31/1/2012	
APS1	10
APS2	5
APS3	42
APS4	9
APS5	11
APS6	7
EL1	8
EL2	7
PAO 2	1
PAO 3	2
SES 1	1
Total	103

2. Table 34.2 below has the number of non-ongoing positions existing or created this financial year to 31 January 2012 by classification.

Table 34.2 Numbers of Non-Ongoing positions existing or created, by classification

Non-ongoing Hires 1/7/2011 to 31/1/2012	
APS1	1
APS2	9
APS3	62
APS4	11
APS5	3
APS6	16
EL1	3
EL2	3
PAO 2	1
PAO 3	1
Total	110

3. The 110 non-ongoing staff have been employed on contract this financial year to 31 January 2012. The average length of employment is 24 weeks.

In addition to this, DVA has one SES Band 1 officer on a five year ongoing fixed term contract.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 35

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Staffing

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. How many ongoing staff left in the year 2010-11? What classification were these staff?
2. How many non ongoing staff left in the year 2010-11? What classification were these staff:

Answer

1. Table 35.1 below has the number of ongoing staff cessations in the year 2010-11 by classification.

Table 35.1 Ongoing cessations by classification

Ongoing Cessations 2010-11	
APS1	3
APS2	10
APS3	29
APS4	17
APS5	21
APS6	26
EL1	43
EL2	17
SES 2	1
Statutory	2
Total	169

2. Table 35.2 below has the number of non ongoing staff cessations in the year 2010-11 by classification.

Table 35.2 Non-Ongoing cessations by classification

Non-ongoing Cessations 2010-11	
APS1	5
APS2	16
APS3	75
APS4	21
APS5	7
APS6	7
EL1	3
EL2	2
SES 1	1
Total	137

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 36

Outcome All: Program: All

Topic: Staffing

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details ie. reduction target, how this will be achieved, services/programs to be cut etc.
2. If there are plans for staff reductions, please give the reason why these are happening.

Answer

1. Yes. The potential impact of the efficiency dividend is currently being worked through and details on the final savings measures to be adopted have not yet been determined. However, it is anticipated that we may need to reduce by around 90 staff nationally. Any reductions will be managed through a combination of natural attrition, targeted reductions of non-ongoing staff and a one-off targeted Voluntary Redundancy program. The staff in the areas potentially affected are being consulted with by line managers and the Department is also in discussion with the CPSU.
2. The changes to business activities and workforce numbers are so that the Department can live within its 2012-13 budget.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 37

Outcome All: Program General

Topic: Efficiency Dividend

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. How will the efficiency dividend applied in the 2011-12 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook be implemented in your agency/department?
2. What percentage of your budget must be cut?
3. Will any staff position be cut to meet the efficiency dividend? If yes, provide details of where the positions are located, the classification, whether the position is ongoing or not.
4. Please list where and what spending has been reduced to meet the efficiency dividend.

Answer

1. The potential impacts of the efficiency dividend is currently being worked through and details on the final savings measures to be adopted have not yet been determined. However, it is anticipated that we may need to reduce by around 90 staff nationally. Any reductions will be managed through a combination of natural attrition, targeted reductions of non-ongoing staff and a one-off targeted Voluntary Redundancy program. The staff in the areas potentially affected are being consulted with by line managers and the Department is also in discussion with the CPSU.
2. The Government reduced DVA's departmental funding by a total of 4% in the 2012-13 financial year.
3. Please refer to answer provided in Part 1. Details on individual positions, location and classification have not yet been determined.
4. Please refer to answer provided in Part 1.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 38

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Staffing

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

Please list the SES positions have you in your department/agency in the years 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and financial year to date. Identify the different levels and how many are permanent positions.

Answer

The table below indicates the SES positions for the financial years 2007 until 31 January 2012.

	2007 - 08	2008 - 09	2009 - 10	2010 - 11	2011 – 31/1/12
SES 1	24	21	20	20	21
SES 2	10	11	8	8	8
Total	34	32	28	28	29

Note: All positions are permanent.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 39

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Staffing

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. How many graduates have been engaged this year? Where have they been placed in the department/agency? Were these empty positions or are they new positions?
2. List what training will be provided, the name of the provider and the cost.

Answer

1. 15 graduates have been engaged this year. During the graduate year each graduate completes three job rotations, across various business areas, each of approximately 12 to 13 weeks duration.

Upon successful completion of the graduate development program, graduates are placed in vacant APS4 positions within various Divisions. These placements will be decided late this year (usually around November) and the graduates will take up these roles early in 2013.

2. Graduate training:

2.1 Graduate-specific training

Training course	Provider	Cost per graduate	Total cost
Orientation week	DVA Staff	\$87	\$1,300
Graduate Development Program (includes Diploma of Government)	Australian Public Service Commission (APSC)	\$6,667	\$100,000

2.2 Graduate attendance at corporate training

Training course	Provider	Cost
E-learning modules including, Mental Health Awareness, Security Awareness	DVA e-Learning system	Costs cannot be attributed to individual graduates. Participation in these courses is part of a broader package of corporately-funded training for all staff.
File management training	DVA staff	
Understanding Military Culture and Mental Health	DVA staff with military background	

Graduates also participate in various other internal DVA training from time to time.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 40

Outcome All: Program All
Topic: Government Advertising
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. What was the total cost of all advertising for 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11?
2. For each of those years, list whether the advertising is campaign or non-campaign and details of each advertising, including the program the advertising was for, the total spend and the business that provided the advertising services.
3. Did the Department of Finance and Deregulation provide any advice about the advertising? Provide details of each advertising item.
4. Did the Advertising comply with the Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by Australian Government Departments and Agencies? Provide the details for each advertising item.
5. Provide details for any other communications program, including details of the program, the total spend and the business that provided the communication services.
6. What advertising – Campaign and Non-Campaign – and other communications programs is the Department/Agency undertaking, or are planning to undertake?

Answer

1. Information about the cost of advertising for the four financial years is publicly available in the appendices of the Department's annual reports:
2007-08, see Appendix E, Page 212
2008-09, see Appendix F, Page 346
2009-10, see Appendix F, Page 378
2010-11, see Appendix F, Page 353
2. Non-campaign advertising was undertaken in each of the four years. Campaign advertising was only undertaken in 2009-10 and 2010-11. Details of advertising is publicly available in the appendices of the Department's annual reports:
2007-08, see Appendix E, Page 212
2008-09, see Appendix F, Page 346
2009-10, see Appendix F, Page 378
2010-11, see Appendix F, Page 353
3. Yes, the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance) provided general advice about planned advertising for the four financial years.
4. Yes, all advertising for the four financial years complied with Australian Government guidelines and, from March 2010, with the Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by the Australian Government Departments and Agencies. Advertising undertaken by the Department during these periods did not exceed the \$250,000 threshold which requires campaign review and certification in consultation with Finance.

5. Information about other communications programs undertaken, such as market research and direct mail, is publicly available in the appendices of the Department's annual reports:
2007-08, see Appendix E, Page 212
2008-09, see Appendix F, Page 346
2009-10, see Appendix F, Page 378
2010-11, see Appendix F, Page 353
6. Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice 14 from Supplementary Budget Estimates 19 October 2011-12.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 41

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Hospitality and Entertainment

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. What is the Department/Agency's hospitality spend for this financial year to date? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.
2. For each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary office, please detail total hospitality spend for this financial year to date. Detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event.
3. What is the Department's entertainment spend for this financial year to date? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.
4. For each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary office, please detail total entertainment spend for this financial year to date. Detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event.
5. What hospitality spend is the Department/Agency's planning on spending? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.
6. For each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary office, what hospitality spend is currently being planned for? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event.
7. What entertainment spend is the Department/Agency's planning on spending? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.
8. For each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary office, what entertainment spend is currently being planned for? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event.

Answer

1 and 3.

In the financial year 2011-12 to 31 January 2012, DVA spent \$12,980 on hospitality/entertainment. This amount is exclusive of GST and is predominantly for small purchases of refreshments for meetings and forums involving external parties, in particular ex-service organisations. To provide separate figures for hospitality and entertainment, or detail on date and location, would take time and effort and be too resources intensive.

2 and 4.

Nil.

5 and 7.

This is not something that the Department can definitively answer. Assuming the Department conducts a similar number of meetings and forums as last year we would expect to spend approximately the same amount as last year which was approximately \$17,000 for both hospitality and entertainment.

6 and 8.

It is likely that, as in previous years, the Minister will brief representatives of key national ex-service organisations on veterans issues in the 2012-13 budget in his Parliament House office. It is expected that costs would not vary significantly from last year's event. Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice 15 from Supplementary Budget Estimates 19 October 2011.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 42

Outcome All: Program All
Topic: Board Appointments
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. List all of the boards within this portfolio, including: board title, terms of appointment, tenure of appointment and members.
2. What is the gender ratio on each board and across the portfolio?
3. Please detail any board appointments for this financial year to date.

Answer

1. A list of all boards within this portfolio as at 31 January 2012 is available at Attachment A.
2. As at 31 January 2012, the gender composition of boards, including ex-officio's members, across the portfolio was as follows:

Body	Female		Male	
Repatriation Commission	0	0%	3	100%
Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission	0	0%	5	100%
Veterans' Review Board	12	30%	28	70%
Repatriation Medical Authority	1	20%	4	80%
Specialist Medical Review Council	4	14%	24	86%
Australian War Memorial Council	3	25%	9	75%
Prime Ministerial Advisory Council	4	36%	7	64%
Anzac Centenary Advisory Board	5	24%	16	76%
National Advisory Council – VVCS	2	14%	12	86%

3. This information is provided as part of Senate Order on Government Appointments prior to each Estimates hearing.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Questions 43 & 51

Outcome All: Program All
Topic: Discretionary Grants
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. Could the Department provide a list of all discretionary grants, including ad hoc and one-off grants for this financial year to date? Please provide details of the recipients, the intended use of the grants and what locations have benefited from the grants.
2. Has the Department complied with interim requirements relating to the publication of discretionary grants?

Answer

1. All approved grants are published on the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) website. Lists of all approved DVA grants can be found at the following links:

http://www.dva.gov.au/ex-service_organisations/grants/Pages/ApprovedGrantsList.aspx

http://www.dva.gov.au/ex-service_organisations/grants/Pages/OPCMR.aspx

The website lists two rounds of Veteran and Community Grants (July and October 2011); the Building Excellence in Support and Training Round 13 grants (July to August 2011); and Phase 1 of the Service Delivery Integration (SDI) Grant (November 2011). The tables provide details of the recipient, the purpose of the grant, the amount paid, the approval date, the term of the grant, the funding location and its postcode.

2. All grants are usually published on the DVA website within seven working days after the funding agreement is signed by both parties. Most of the information at the link above is consistent with this requirement however DVA was not compliant in regard to publication of the Phase 1 SDI Grants. Information was published between seven and 14 days after signing of the funding agreement.

Note: Since 2009 there have been no interim reporting requirements. The Commonwealth Grant Guidelines (CGGs) and Finance Circular No 2009/04 set out the reporting requirements for grants. The CGGs currently require an agency to publish, on its website, information on its individual grants no later than seven working days after the funding agreement for the grant takes effect.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 44

Outcome: All: Program All

Topic: Freedom of Information

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. Has the Department/agency received any advice on how to respond to FOI requests?
2. What was the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for 2009-10 and 2010-11?
3. What is the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for this financial year to date?
4. How many FOI requests did the Department receive for the financial year 2009-10 and 2010-11?
5. For each financial year, how many requests were denied and how many were granted?
6. Did the department fail to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests? If so, how many? Do any of these requests remain outstanding?
7. How many FOI requests has the Department received for this financial year to date?
8. How many requests have been denied and how many have been granted?
9. Has the department failed to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests? If so, how many? Do any of these requests remain outstanding?
10. How many conclusive certificates have been issued in relation to FOI requests for this financial year to date?

Answer

1. The Department responds to FOI requests in accordance with the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and Guidelines issued by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

2 and 3.

YEAR	FOI PROCESSING COSTS
2009 – 10	\$1,213,290
2010 – 11	\$1,085,145
2011 – 12 (to 31 December 2011)	\$523,740

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Revised Question 45

Outcome All: Program All
Topic: Community Cabinets
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. What was the cost of Ministers travel and expenses for the Community Cabinet meetings held this financial year to date?
2. How many Ministerial Staff travelled with the Minister for the Community Cabinet meetings for this financial year to date? What was the total cost of this travel?
3. How many Departmental officers travelled with the Minister for the Community Cabinet meetings for this financial year to date? What was the total cost of this travel? List travel type, accommodate and any other expenses.
4. What was the total cost to the Department and the Ministers office for the Community Cabinet meetings for this financial year to date?

Answer

1 and 2.

Nil. The Minister did not attend any Community Cabinet meetings held this financial year to 31 January 2012. Travel costs for the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and his staff for Community Cabinet meetings are paid through the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

3. Two departmental officers separately attended two Community Cabinet meetings in support of the Minister for Defence Materiel for the 2011-12 financial year as at 31 January 2012. The total cost was \$498.24.
4. Please refer to answer provided in Part 3.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 45

Outcome All: Program All
Topic: Community Cabinets
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. What was the cost of Ministers travel and expenses for the Community Cabinet meetings held this financial year to date?
2. How many Ministerial Staff travelled with the Minister for the Community Cabinet meetings for this financial year to date? What was the total cost of this travel?
3. How many Departmental officers travelled with the Minister for the Community Cabinet meetings for this financial year to date? What was the total cost of this travel? List travel type, accommodate and any other expenses.
4. What was the total cost to the Department and the Ministers office for the Community Cabinet meetings for this financial year to date?

Answer

1 and 2.

Nil. The Minister did not attend any Community Cabinet meetings held this financial year to 31 January 2012. Travel costs for the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and his staff for Community Cabinet meetings are paid through the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

3. One departmental officer attended a Community Cabinet meeting in support of the Minister for Defence Materiel for the 2011-12 financial year as at 31 January 2012. The total cost was \$498.24.
4. Please refer to answer provided in Part 3.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011-12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 46

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Reviews

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

For this financial year to date:

1. How many Reviews are being undertaken?
2. What reviews have concluded, and for those that are still ongoing, when will those reviews be concluded?
3. Which of these reviews has been provided to Government?
4. When will the Government be responding to the respective reviews that have been completed?
5. What is the estimated cost of each of these Reviews?
6. What reviews are planned?
7. When will each of these reviews be concluded?

Answer

For 2011-12 financial year to 31 January 2012.

1. Two.

2 to 7.

Refer to the attached table.

DVA Reviews for the 2011-12 financial year.

Name of Review	Date Completed	Provided to Government	Timing of Government Response to Completed Review	Estimated Cost of Review
Analysis of the possible entitlement of service pension for members of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force.	21 August 2011	26 August 2011	The date of the Government's response is not yet finalised. Subsequent advice from the Department of Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs was provided to Government on 21 March 2012.	The approximate direct cost of the review is \$8,000. This does not include the cost of staff of the Department who provided assistance to the review.
Review of Specialist Medical Review Council and Repatriation Medical Authority	31 August 2011	18 November 2011	The date of the Government's response is not yet finalised.	The estimated cost of this review is \$78,000 for the cost of consulting work. This does not include the cost of staff of the Department who provided assistance to the review.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 47

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Consultancies

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. How many consultancies were undertaken in 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10?
2. How many consultancies have been undertaken this financial year to date?
 - a) Identify the name of the consultant, the subject matter of the consultancy, the duration and cost of the arrangement, and the method of procurement (ie. open tender, direct source, etc). Also include total value for all consultancies.
3. How many consultancies are planned for this calendar year?
 - a) Have these been published in your Annual Procurement Plan (APP) on the AusTender website and if not why not? In each case please identify the subject matter, duration, cost and method of procurement as above, and the name of the consultant if known.

Answer

1. Details of the number of consultancies undertaken in 2007-08 are available in the Department of Veterans' Affairs Annual Report 2007-08, page 168.

Details of the number of consultancies undertaken in 2008-09 and 2009-10 are available in the Department of Veterans' Affairs Annual Report 2010-2011, page 56.

2. 34 consultancies have been undertaken this financial year to 31 January 2012 and the details requested are at AusTender (www.tenders.gov.au). The total value for these consultancies over their contract life is \$2.8m.
3. Two consultancies are planned for the remainder of this calendar year and these procurement opportunities have been advertised in the Annual Procurement Plan (APP) on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au). The requested details are also available on the APP on the AusTender website.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 48

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Media Monitoring

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. What was the total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera, provided to the Minister's office for 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11?
2. What was the total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera, provided to the department/agency for 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11
3. What was the total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera, provided to the Minister's office for this financial year to date?
 - a) Which agency or agencies provided these services?
 - b) What is the estimated budget to provide this same services for the year 2011-12?
 - c) What has been spent providing these services this financial year to date?
4. What was the total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera, provided to the department/agency for this financial year to date?
 - a) Which agency or agencies provided these services?
 - b) What is the estimated budget to provide this same services for the year 2011-12?
 - c) What has been spent providing these services this financial year to date?

Answer

- 1 & 2. The same press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera are provided to the Minister's office and to the Department. The total costs are as follows:

2007-08	\$137,519
2008-09	\$166,238
2009-10	\$160,002
2010-11	\$173,192

- 3 & 4. The same press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera are provided to the Minister's office and to the Department.

- a) & b) Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice 21 from Supplementary Budget Estimates 19 October 2011.
- c) The total expenditure as at 31 January 2012 is \$111,095.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 49

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Social Media

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

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

There have been no changes to staff access protocols regarding social media sites and no need to change the Department's social media presence since the issue of the Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2012/1.

To ensure that the internet, including social media sites, are accessed appropriately, the Department's IT Security team actively monitors all access to the Internet.

4 & 5 and 7 & 8.

FOI Requests	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12 (to 31 December 2011)
Received	5,158	4,955	2,240
Finalised	5,264	4,860	2,433
Granted in full	4,572	4,178	2,087
Granted in part	29	36	23
Access Refused	10	17	14
Transferred	480	481	238
Withdrawn	157	135	71
Outstanding (as at the end of the financial year)	370	369	200
Response-0 – 30 days	4,369	4,085	2,053
Response-31 – 60 days (consultation)	8	23	6
Response-31 – 60 days	183	110	58
Response-61 – 90 days	47	21	4
Response-over 90 days	20	4	3

No FOI requests that were received prior to 31 December 2011 remain outstanding.

6 and 9.

The FOI Act requires requests to be processed within 30 days of receipt or within an extension of time approved by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner or the applicant. For the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011, 8 requests were not processed within the statutory timeframe or approved extended times. All 8 of these requests have since been finalised.

10. Nil. The operation of the *Freedom of Information (Removal of Conclusive Certificates and Other Measures) Act 2009* means that Conclusive Certificates can no longer be issued.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 50

Outcome General: Program All

Topic: Contractors

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. Has the department/agency ever employed Hawker Britton in any capacity or is it considering employing Hawker Britton? If yes, provide details.
2. Has the department/agency ever employed Shannon's Way in any capacity or is it considering employing Shannon's Way? If yes, provide details.
3. Has the department/agency ever employed John Utting & UMR Research Group in any capacity or is it considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group? If yes, provide details.
4. Has the department/agency ever employed McCann-Erickson in any capacity or is it considering employing McCann-Erickson? If yes, provide details.
5. Has the department/agency ever employed Cutting Edge in any capacity or is it considering employing Cutting Edge? If yes, provide details.
6. Has the department/agency ever employed Ikon Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing Ikon Communications? If yes, provide details.
7. Has the department/agency ever employed CMAX Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing CMAX Communications? If yes, provide details.
8. Has the department/agency ever employed Boston Consulting Group in any capacity or is it considering employing Boston Consulting Group? If yes, provide details.
9. Has the department/agency ever employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity or is it considering employing McKinsey & Company? If yes, provide details

Answer

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has not engaged and is not currently considering engaging the contractors identified above at numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9, according to the Department's Contracts Registers. The Department contracted with number 5 - Cutting Edge Pty Ltd (ABN 73 130 740 546) for DVD Burn and Audio 2x1 hours services for Gallipoli commemorative activities to the value of \$3,300 in 2005.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 52

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Commissioned Reports

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. How many reports were commissioned by the government in your portfolio in 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11?
2. How many Reports have been commissioned by the Government in your portfolio this financial year to date? Please provide details of each report including date commissioned, date report handed to Government, date of public release, Terms of Reference and Committee members.
 - a) How much did each report cost/or is estimated to cost? How many departmental staff were involved in each report and at what level?
 - b) What is the current status of each report? When is the Government intending to respond to these reports?

Answer

1. Please refer to the answers provided to Question on Notice 10 from the Additional Budget Estimates 10 February 2010, and Question on Notice 25 from the Supplementary Budget Estimates 19 October 2011.
2. Nil.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 53

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Government Payment of Accounts

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLSTON asked:

1. For this financial year to date, has the department/agency paid its accounts to contractors/consultants etc in accordance with Government policy in terms of time for payment (i.e. within 30 days)? If not, why not, and what has been the timeframe for payment of accounts? Please provide a breakdown, average statistics etc as appropriate to give insight into how this issue is being approached.
 - a) For accounts not paid within 30 days, is interest being paid on overdue amounts and if so how much has been paid by the portfolio/department agency for the current financial year and the previous financial year?
 - b) Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

Answer

1. For the 2011-12 financial year to 29 February 2012 the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) paid 93.94% of its invoices within 30 days of receipt of a correctly rendered invoice, in accordance with Government policy.

1 July 2011 – 29 February 2012	Paid within 30 days	Paid within 31-44 days	Paid within 45-60 days	Not paid within 60 days	TOTAL
	Paid on- time	(up to 14 days late)	(up to 30 days late)	(30 or more days late)	
Number of Invoices	6,405	193	106	132	6,836
% of invoices by number	93.70%	2.82%	1.55%	1.93%	100.00%

- a) No interest has been paid on overdue amounts in the current or previous financial years.
- b) Not applicable.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 54

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Government Stationery Requirements

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

How much was spent by each department and agency on the government (Ministers/Parliamentary Secretaries) stationery requirements in your portfolio (i.e. paper, envelopes, with compliments slips) this financial year to date?

Answer

Expenditure on stationery is recorded for the whole Department under a single account code and it would be too resource intensive to identify what proportion was attributed to the Office of the Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 55

Outcome All: Program All
Topic: Media Subscriptions
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. Does your department or agencies within your portfolio subscribe to pay TV (for example Foxtel)?
 - a) If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what channels.
 - b) What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?
 - c) What is the cost for this financial year to date?
2. Does your department or agencies within your portfolio subscribe to newspapers?
 - a) If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what newspapers.
 - b) What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?
 - c) What is the cost for this financial year to date?
3. Does your department or agencies within your portfolio subscribe to magazines?
 - a) If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what magazines.
 - b) What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?
 - c) What is the cost for this financial year to date?

Answer

1.
 - a) Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice 28 from Supplementary Budget Estimates 19 October 2012.
 - b) \$3,000.00
 - c) \$1,750.00

2 and 3, a), b) and c).

Yes. To allow the Department's professional staff (e.g. counsellors, medical staff, historians, pharmacists etc) to research, monitor and maintain their awareness of latest developments in their fields of speciality. Expenditure on newspapers and magazines are recorded against two account codes – one is titled as 'Newspapers, Subscriptions, Journals, Magazines' and the other is titled as 'Funding for the Library' (includes subscriptions for Manuals/Magazines/Journals). To extract details of what proportion was attributed to just magazines and newspapers would be too resource intensive.

For financial year to 31 January 2012, the expenditure under 'Newspaper, Subscriptions, Journals and Magazines' was \$23,877. However this includes more than just Newspapers/Magazines. The expenditure under 'Funding for the Library' was \$1,780, however this includes more than just Newspapers/Magazines.

For financial year 2011-12, it is anticipated that the costs would be similar to the previous financial year which was \$28,613 for 'Newspaper, Subscriptions, Journals and Magazines' and \$5,187 for 'Funding for the Library'.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 56

Outcome All: Program General

Topic: Travel Costs

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel (itemised separately,) undertaken by your portfolio Minister and Parliamentary Secretaries. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type – i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses.
2. For the financial year to date, please provide the same information (itemised separately) for any Minister and Parliamentary staff that accompanied the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary on their travel and include a similar breakdown of the costs incurred by or on behalf of those staff.
3. For the financial year to date, please provide the same information (itemised separately) for Departmental officers that accompanied the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary on their travel and include a similar breakdown of the costs incurred by or on behalf of those staff.
4. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel (itemised separately) undertaken by employees of each department and agency within each portfolio. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type – i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses.
5. Are employees taking the most direct route when travelling? If not, please explain why.
6. Are lounge memberships provided to any employees? If yes, what lounge memberships, to how many employees and their classification, the reason for the provision of lounge membership and the cost per employee.
7. When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as their Executive Assistant) travel with them? If yes, provide details of why such a staff member is needed and the costs of the support staff travel.

Answer

1 and 2.

Travel expenses undertaken by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and his staff are paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation. The report *Parliamentarians' travel costs paid for by the Department of Finance and Deregulation*, is tabled biannually providing details of the dates and purpose of the travel, the countries of destination and the costs of visits. Further information on ministerial visits is also available on ministerial web sites and in media releases and media reports.

3. Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice number 29 from Supplementary Budget Estimates 19 October 2011 for the information from 1 July 2011 to 30 September 2011.

Additionally, in February 2012, the Repatriation Commissioner accompanied the Minister to Malaysia and Singapore to lead a delegation of six veterans to attend the 70th Anniversary commemorations of the Malaysian Campaign and the fall of Singapore.

Total costs incurred whilst accompanying the Minister were \$4,816.08.

The Opposition representative on this Mission was Mr Stuart Robert MP, Member for Fadden.

4. For the 2011-12 financial year to 31 January 2012 the Department spent \$4,832,474 on employee travel. This figure includes domestic and overseas travel. The expenditure breakup is shown in the table below.

Staff travel in accordance with their entitlements. Non Senior Executive Service (SES) employees are required to travel economy class domestically except on specifically defined long haul sectors, namely east coast capitals to Perth and Darwin and visa versa. On these sectors employees may travel Business class. SES officers may travel business class on any sector and all staff may travel Business class when travelling internationally.

All staff are paid a travelling allowance to cover expenses such as meals and incidentals when they are required to travel overnight. The allowances paid are based on rates set by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). Expenditure on food, beverages and other travel expenses is at the discretion of the staff member. Only the amount of the allowance is recorded.

Accommodation is generally booked through DVA's accommodation broker who invoices DVA directly. Amounts paid for accommodation are also based on rates set by DEEWR.

In the 2011-12 financial year to 31 January 2012, the number of official trips undertaken by DVA employees was approximately 2,700. To attempt to provide meaningful detail on what each trip was for would take time and effort and be too resource intensive.

Financial Year 2011-12 to 31 January 2012

Travel type	Spend
Fares	\$2,701,101
Travel Allowances/Accommodation/Parking/Tolls	\$1,873,519
Car hire	\$257,853
Total	\$4,832,473

Note: Figures are GST inclusive where applicable.

5. DVA travellers must choose the lowest practical fare in accordance with Government policy. When determining lowest practical fare travellers must consider timing and convenience, including options concerning the most direct or shortest route.
6. Lounge memberships are provided to employees who qualify. To qualify the employee must travel at least 12 times per year and have the endorsement of their Assistant Secretary. As at March 2012, 147 employees hold QANTAS lounge memberships provided by the Department. Twenty of these memberships are held by employees at the SES level. The remaining 127 memberships are held by non SES employees. Memberships are usually provided for periods of two years at a cost of \$435 per membership.

Nine employees hold Virgin lounge memberships, all of which have been provided free of charge by Virgin Australia. Three of these employees belong to the SES. The remaining six are non SES employees.

7. Support or administrative staff do not usually travel with SES employees.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

REVISED Question 57

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Legal Costs

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for this financial year to date within the department/agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
2. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
3. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
4. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

Answer

The Department does not generally disclose the content of legal advice received. It is important for the Department to be able to make fully informed decisions based on comprehensive and confidential legal advice. As such only total figures for legal service expenditure are provided.

1. As at 31 December 2011, DVA has spent \$1.44 million on legal services within the Department.
2. As at 31 December 2011, DVA has spent \$0.55 million on legal services from the Australian Government Solicitor.
3. As at 31 December 2011, DVA has spent \$2.02 million on legal services from private firms.
4. As at 31 December 2011, DVA has spent \$0.37 million on legal services from other sources (barristers and disbursements)

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 57

Outcome: All Program: All

Topic: Legal Costs

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for this financial year to date within the department/agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
2. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
3. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
4. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

Answer

The Department does not generally disclose the content of legal advice received. It is important for the Department to be able to make fully informed decisions based on comprehensive and confidential legal advice. As such only total figures for legal service expenditure are provided.

1. As at 31 December 2011, DVA has spent \$2.17 million on legal services within the Department.
2. As at 31 December 2011, DVA has spent \$0.55 million on legal services from the Australian Government Solicitor.
3. As at 31 December 2011, DVA has spent \$2.02 million on legal services from private firms.
4. As at 31 December 2011, DVA has spent \$0.37 million on legal services from other sources (barristers and disbursements)

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 58

Outcome All: Program General

Topic: Education Expenses

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

For this financial year to date, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio department and agency. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant. Also include the reason for the study.

Answer

The Department's human resource management information system does not record full details of staff in receipt of education benefits (i.e. study assistance) nor a breakdown of the type of study assistance received.

Furthermore, in relation to training courses, there is no central recording of all departmental training. Individual business areas arrange training from time to time which is specific only to their area and needs. This training is not centrally recorded.

The time and effort to provide this information would be too resource intensive.

In the financial year 2011-12 to 31 January 2012, the Department's financial management system has recorded expenditure of \$978,371 on learning and development activities. This figure is primarily payments to training providers for the design and delivery of courses, and associated administrative costs, but does not include staff salary costs.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 59

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Executive Coaching and Leadership Training

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

- a. In relation to the purchase of executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by each portfolio department and agency, please provide the following information for this financial year to date:
 - a) Total spending on these services
 - b) The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
 - c) The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted
 - d) The names of all service providers engaged
2. For each service purchased from a provider listed under (d), please provide:
 - a) The name and nature of the service purchased
 - b) Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
 - c) The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification
 - d) The total number of hours involved for all employees
 - e) The total amount spent on the service
 - f) A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)
3. Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:
 - a) The location used
 - b) The number of employees who took part on each occasion
 - c) The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part
 - d) Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Answer

The Department runs two main leadership development programs, which are corporately administered. These are the Executive Leadership Program (ELP) for Executive Level staff and the Looking Forwards Program (LFP) for APS 4 to APS 6 level staff. For these leadership development programs the answers are as follows:

1.
 - a. \$243,887
 - b. These programs are offered to DVA employees at the relevant classifications – i.e. all Executive Level staff and all APS 4 to APS 6 level staff.
 - c. 48 staff attended ELP and 97 staff attended the LFP. These are internal training programs and therefore, study leave is not required.
 - d. Yellow Edge (ELP) and ODS Management Consulting (LFP) were the service providers engaged.

2.

- a. Leadership training.
- b. Group based.
- c. For the financial year to date, 48 Executive Level staff attended ELP and 97 APS 4 to APS 6 level staff attended the LFP.
- d. ELP - 26 hours per person / 1,248 hours total.
LFP - 17 hours per person / 1,649 hours total.
Total hours across both programs: 2897
The hours indicated do not include preparatory and research work individuals undertake as part of the program. This would be difficult to determine and varies between individuals.
- e. \$243,887.
- f. The cost noted above includes facilitation, course materials, venue hire for ELP workshops only and travel costs for facilitators. There is a standard cost for the facilitation; however, the total cost of each program varies depending on the number of participants, course material required and location of the program.

3.

- a. The ELP workshop is held at Yellow Edge's premises in Barton, ACT.
- b. In the financial year to date, 48 staff attended ELP across 3 programs.
- c. 21 hours per person / 1,008 hours total. Please note: this does not include approximately 5 hours for recall and associated preparation and debriefing which occurs at DVA's premises.
- d. There is no separate cost to use the location. This is covered in the total contract cost for Yellow Edge's services.

Individual business areas arrange coaching and leadership training from time to time which is specific only to their area and needs. This training is not centrally recorded and it would be too resource intensive to accurately provide this information.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 60

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Media Training

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. In relation to media training services purchased by each department/agency, please provide the following information for this financial year to date:
 - a) Total spending on these services
 - b) The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
 - c) The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted
 - d) The names of all service providers engaged
2. For each service purchased from a provider listed under (4), please provide:
 - a) The name and nature of the service purchased
 - b) Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
 - c) The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification
 - d) The total number of hours involved for all employees
 - e) The total amount spent on the service
 - f) A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)
3. Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:
 - a) The location used
 - b) The number of employees who took part on each occasion
 - c) The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part
 - d) Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Answer

The Department has not purchased any media training services for this financial year to date.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 61

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Paid Parental Leave

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. Please list how many staff in each portfolio department and agency are eligible to receive payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme?
2. For this financial year to date list which department/agency is providing its employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme? Please list how many staff are in receipt of these payments.

Answer

1. All employees with more than 12 months service who earn less than \$150,000 per annum and are the primary care giver of the child are eligible to receive payment under the government's Paid Parental leave scheme. As eligibility is based on primary caring responsibility, the number of eligible staff cannot be identified.
2. As at 31 January 2012, 12 employees have received payment under the scheme.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 62

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Training for Portfolio Minister and Parliamentary Secretaries

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. For this financial year to date, how much has been spent on training for Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries in your portfolio? Itemise each training, cost and for which Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary the training was for.
2. For this financial year to date, how much has been spent on training for staff of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries in your portfolio? Itemise each training, cost and for which Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary the training was for.
3. For this financial year to date, how much has been spent on training for designed to better suit the needs of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries in your portfolio? Itemise each training, cost and for which Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary the training was for, and how many employees attended and their classification.

Answer

- 1, 2 and 3.
Nil.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 63

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Corporate Cars

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. How many cars are owned by each department and agency in your portfolio?
2. Where is the car/s located?
3. What is the car/s used for?
4. What is the cost of each car for this financial year to date?
5. How far did each car travel this financial year to date?

Answer

1, 2 and 3.

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice 36 from Supplementary Budget Estimates 19 October 2011.

4. For this financial year to 29 February 2012; the running cost of the two cars in Ankara, Turkey is approximately \$7,500.;
 - The running cost of the commercial vehicle located at Port Moresby (Bomana) War Cemetery, Papua New Guinea is approximately \$2,100; and
 - The running cost of the commercial vehicle located at Rabaul (Bitu Paka) War Cemetery, Papua New Guinea is approximately \$1,700.
5. For this financial year the two cars located in Ankara, Turkey have travelled approximately 4,000km (purchased in May 2006) and 31,000 (purchased April 2011) respectively.

The commercial vehicle located at Port Moresby (Bomana) War Cemetery, Papua New Guinea has travelled approximately 10,000km (purchased in February 2010).

The commercial vehicle located at Rabaul (Bitu Paka) War Cemetery, Papua New Guinea has travelled approximately 6,700km (purchased in December 2010).

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 64

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Taxi Costs

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. How much did each department/agency spend on taxis in 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11? Provide a breakdown of each business group in each department/agency.
2. How much did each department/agency spend on taxis this financial year to date? Provide a breakdown of each business group in each department/agency.

Answer

Due to changes in the organisational structure, an attempt to provide accurate travel costs by business group for the years prior to 2010-11 would involve time and effort and be too resource intensive. For the years 2007-08 to 2009-10, figures are provided for the Department as a whole. A breakdown by business group is provided for the years 2010-11 and 2011-12.

The figures provided are inclusive of GST but do not include expenditure on taxis for veterans under the repatriation transport program, or for health services to veterans.

1. The spend on taxis for the financial years 2007-08 to 2009-10 is provided in the following table.

Year	Spend
2007-08	\$1,072,436
2008-09	\$678,128
2009-10	\$781,893
2010-11	Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice 37 from Supplementary Budget Estimates 19 October 2011.

2. The spend on taxis for 2011-12 to 31 January 2012 was \$537,664. The breakdown by business group was:

Business Group	Amount
Secretary, Deputy President and Commissioner	\$8,194
Deputy Commissioners	\$57,049
Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service	\$53,718
Corporate Division	\$79,249
Executive Division	\$53,225
Support Division	\$153,833
Services Division	\$105,881
Repatriation Medical Authority	\$6,076
Veterans Review Board	\$20,439

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 65

Outcome All : Program All
Topic: Printing of Documents
(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

Does the department/agency print any hard copies of reports/statements/papers they produce? If yes, please list how many copies, where they are delivered and the cost.

Answer

Yes. The Departments printing needs for Financial Year to 31 January 2012 are listed below.

Title	Qty	Cost	Distribution
<i>Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986</i>	1000	\$58,500	External Organisations, Other Government Departments, Overseas Veterans' Affairs Agencies and Australian Embassy in Washington
DVA Annual Report 2010-11	730	\$13,257	Statutory Requirements plus ad hoc
VRB Annual Report 2010-11	505	\$4,730	Statutory Requirements plus ad hoc
How Australia may Commemorate the Anzac Centenary – Report to Government	530	\$627	Managed by Commemorations
Data Matching Report 2010 – 2011	500	\$2,013	Statutory Requirements plus ad hoc
Review of Military Compensation Arrangements: Report to Minister for Veterans' Affairs Vol. 1	32	\$330	Distributed to staff and clients on request.

Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Additional Budget Estimates 2011–12; 15 February 2012
Answers to questions on notice from Department of Veterans' Affairs

Question 66

Outcome All: Program All

Topic: Provision of Equipment

(Written Question on Notice)

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. Does the department/agency provide their Ministers and/or Parliamentary Secretaries and/or their offices with any electronic equipment? If yes, provide details of what is provided, the cost and to who it is provided.
2. What equipment is provided to department/agency staff? Please list what the equipment is, the cost, the classification of the staff receiving the equipment and the reason why.

Answer

1. Yes. Details and cost of electronic equipment provided to the Minister and the Minister's Office is below.

- 12 workstations - \$54,072 per annum (includes support)
- 6 printers - \$375
- 1 Video Conferencing unit - \$15,753
- 1 television - \$5,031
- 1 whiteboard - \$1,580
- 1 shredder - \$0.00
- 1 mobile - \$269
- 7 Blackberry's - \$5,243
- 3 iPad's - \$2,712
- 3 laptops - \$8,400

With the exception of the workstations, costs listed above are for the one-off purchase price of the equipment. Ongoing costs for phone and data plans and usage associated with mobile phones, blackberries and iPads are in addition to these costs and are set in accordance with Whole-of-Government panel pricing arrangements. To provide an accurate breakdown of these ongoing costs for each device would involve considerable time and effort and be too resource intensive.

2. All staff are provided with a standard workstation suite of products (PC or thin client, monitor, phone, keyboard, mouse and desktop software) and support of those products at an average annual cost of \$4,506.00 per person. SES officers also receive a Blackberry as do some non-SES officers based on an identified business requirement.

Non-standard products required by staff are issued on a case by case basis following receipt of an approved business case. Provision of a detailed breakdown of equipment provided to staff by cost and staff level would involve time and effort and be too resource intensive.