

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 19-23 October 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet
Topic: Freedom of Information complaints

Senator: Ms Catryna Bilyk

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Type of question: Written

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Question:

How many complaints about the Department or the PMO's handling of FOI requests have been made to the OAIC in 2015?

What was the basis of each of those complaints?

What was the outcome of each of those complaints?

What steps has the Department taken to improve its performance in relation to FOI matters?

Answer:

Since 1 November 2014, the Commonwealth Ombudsman has been handling complaints relating to the processing of Freedom of Information (FOI) matters. Any complaints received by the Office of the Australian Information Commission (OAIC) after this date are referred to the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

From 1 January 2015 to 19 October 2015, three complaints have been made to the Commonwealth Ombudsman from two FOI applicants. All three complaints concerned the length of time to notify decisions.

Two of the three complaints were finalised by the Commonwealth Ombudsman with no further action required from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and one is still underway.

At its regular internal team meetings with staff responsible for the processing of FOI requests, PM&C has reinforced the need to deal with requests in a timely manner and to keep applicants up to date on the progress of their requests.