

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2016-17**

Finance Portfolio  
18 October 2016

**Department/Agency:** Department of Finance

**Outcome/Program:** 2/2.1

**Topic:** Finance's involvement in relation to ICT in the Australian Bureau of Statistics

**Senator:** Gallagher, McAllister

**Question reference number:** F20

**Type of question:** Hansard Proof, F&PA Committee, Page 64, 18 October 2016

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday, 2 December 2016

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

**Senator GALLAGHER:** In relation to any of those gateway reviews, was any work done with the ABS in the lead up to some of the ICT issues pertaining to the census? Had you been involved in any of the—?

**Ms Huxtable:** They have certainly been subject to gateway reviews, but we might have to take on notice the exact detail, because there are a range of ICT projects in the ABS—including their big transformation project.

**Senator GALLAGHER:** It would be good to know what Finance's involvement has been in relation to ICT in ABS.

**Dr Bartlett:** We will take that on notice.

**Senator GALLAGHER:** Thank you.

**Senator McALLISTER:** Sorry, do you need to take the question of the census on notice? You cannot tell us whether or not you have provided advice?

**Ms Huxtable:** The question was specifically about gateway reviews, and there are a number of ICT-related activities in the ABS, so it is more about which one at what time et cetera.

**Senator McALLISTER:** I will ask a specific question, then, about the census. Did Finance have any role in advising the ABS on ICT issues around the 2016 census?

**Mr Sheridan:** No, we did not.

**Senator McALLISTER:** I am surprised by that—I suppose because my perception has been that moving the census online was a project of quite some scale.

**Ms Huxtable:** We might just have to clarify.

**Dr Bartlett:** Mr Sheridan has talked about specific advice provided in terms of operational IT. We have a responsibility for assurance. I think what we are saying is that if you would like us to give you detail about an assurance process related to census I would have to take that on notice and check what is there. The documentation I have here deals with current assurance review processes. It indicates that the ABS transformation project is the subject of gateway reviews at the moment. It does not include the census, but it may well be because the census has already occurred, so I will need to check that and come back to you with notes.

**Ms Huxtable:** Just to be clear: the budget measure in respect of the census is actually quite an old one now. It was in the 2013-14 budget, so we would need to go back and have a look at the capital investment component of that.

**Senator McALLISTER:** Okay, so you will take that on notice.

**Answer:**

Finance did not have a role in advising the ABS on the ICT issues that arose during the 2016 census.

The e-Census project was not subject to the Gateway Review process as, based on the information provided to Finance, it did not meet the criteria for inclusion. The ABS retained responsibility for actively monitoring and mitigating risk.