

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: Australian Standard on ICT accessibility

Senator: Bilyk
Question reference number: F54
Type of question: Written
Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 2 December 2016

Number of pages: 2

Question:

The Chief Technology Officer Mr Sheridan made an announcement on 9th September about the Federal Government's intention to establish an Accessibility Standard for ICT.

1. What has prompted this announcement?
2. Is this a Cabinet commitment?
3. Other than the US and EU efforts, what other country has implemented this standard? Is Australia playing catch up?
4. Given the development of common standards across Australia and NZ on a range of fronts, is NZ involved here?
5. What information can the CTO or the Department provide about the process by which this procurement standard will be developed?
 - a) Timeframe?
 - b) Scope?
 - c) Whole of government?
 - d) Is it a COAG identified priority?
 - e) Who will lead this work?
 - f) Which Minister will have carriage?
 - g) What consultation with other stakeholder ministers?
 - h) What engagement of stakeholder departments and agencies?
 - i) Will there be consultation with the disability advocacy groups and consumer representatives?
 - j) What involvement will there be from other sectors - the financial services sector for example? ABS, ICT industry in developing the standard?
 - k) Where is this item in the budget papers?
 - l) Cost of the development?

Answer:

1. The Australian Government is not creating an Accessibility Standard for ICT. The announcement on 9 September 2016 noted that Standards Australia had agreed to create a standard. It was this agreement that prompted the announcement.
2. N/A
3. There is, as yet, no Australian or international standard. There is a European standard, EN 301 549, and a broadly equivalent United States government regulation, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973. Research conducted by Finance has indicated that original equipment manufacturers and international software vendors very largely already comply with these requirements and do not change their products for the Australian market.
4. The development of the standard is the responsibility of Standards Australia, not the Department of Finance.
5. a) - 1). The development of the standard is the responsibility of Standards Australia, not the Department of Finance.