

Question: 4

Topic: Assessment of the Department of the Senate's paper procurement

Written: 1 December 2016

Senator Carr asked:

On what date is the next assessment scheduled for the Department of the Senate's paper procurement practices for A4 copy paper?

Answer:

The department conducted its most recent assessment of paper procurement in October/November 2016. The result of the assessment is that the A4 paper that has been procured by the department since June 2015, Impact 100% recycled paper, still represents best value for money taking into consideration the requirements of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs).

The department procures paper through the whole-of-government Stationery and Office Supplies Panel Arrangement. In July 2015, the department transitioned to procuring 100% recycled paper in compliance with the Government's ICT Sustainability Plan 2010-2015 which required Commonwealth agencies to procure general use copy paper with 100% recycled content by July 2015. Environmental sustainability is also a specific consideration under the CPRs (para 4.5(e)). For this transition, four 100% recycled A4 papers from the panel were evaluated. Impact 100% recycled paper was assessed as representing the best value for money taking into consideration performance and the other relevant factors set out in the CPRs, including price. Since the transition to 100% recycled paper was implemented, the ICT Sustainability Plan has ceased and agencies are no longer required to comply with the plan.

The department therefore included in its most recent paper assessment two additional paper brands with less than 100% recycled content (that nonetheless had some environmental credentials), Staples 20% recycled/carbon neutral and Staples Carbon Neutral. The department also considered the work of the Anti-Dumping Commission, noting that none of the paper assessed is the subject of the Commission's investigations. Under the CPRs, country of origin cannot be a determining factor as they preclude discrimination based on size, degree of foreign affiliation or ownership, location or the origin of goods and services (para 5.3).

The outcome of this recent assessment, which again involved testing of the paper for performance, and consideration of the other factors permitted under the CPRs including price, found that Impact 100% recycled paper was still the best value for money paper.

There are other paper brands with less than 100% recycled content on the panel that the department was not able to include in the most recent assessment due to time constraints. The next assessment is due in the first quarter of 2017 and additional paper brands will also be assessed at that time. The department notes that revised Commonwealth Procurement Rules were tabled on 30 November 2016 and these will also be taken into account in the next assessment.