

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 27 February 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE17/236) - Government Waste - Internal Product (DIBP)

Senator Xenophon, Nick (L&CA) written:

Given that government and opposition politicians have all raised concerns over time and had policies on government waste:

1. Is there a central government authority responsible for the elimination of waste?
2. If so
 - a. Is there a government wide definition on the meaning of 'waste', and if so, what is that definition?
 - b. How does this central government authority monitor and manage waste within the Department?
 - c. Is there a central government mechanism (e.g. phone number, email address, web site) for public servants or contractors to report Departmental waste?
 - d. How much Departmental waste was identified by the central government authority in FY 13/14, FY 14/15 and FY 15/16?
3. If not:
 - a. Is there a departmental definition on the meaning of 'waste', and if so, what is that definition?
 - b. What are the Department's arrangements for monitoring and managing waste?
 - c. Is there a central Departmental mechanism (e.g. phone number, email address, web site) for public servants or contractors to report Departmental waste?
 - d. How much waste was identified by the Department in FY 13/14, FY 14/15 and FY 15/16?
4. In either case:
 - a. Can Departmental officers or contractors report waste anonymously?
 - b. Are they afforded a protection if they do so?

Answer:

1. Refer to the Department of Finance's response to Additional Senate Estimates Question F128.
2. Refer to the Department of Finance's response to Additional Senate Estimates Question F128.
- 3a. No. The Department does not have a definition of 'waste'.
- 3b. The Department's expenditure of public money and allocation of resources is appropriately managed in accordance with the *Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act*.
- 3c. Staff are able to escalate any work-related matters through normal reporting lines or report their concerns to Integrity & Professional Standards Division via a central email address or telephone hotline.
- 3d. The Department does not use a definition of 'waste' and therefore it cannot be identified.
- 4a. Where there may be concerns that conduct committed by an agency or a public official that constitutes maladministration and/or results in wastage of public

money or public property (amongst other types of behaviour), departmental officers or contractors may make a disclosure under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2013* (PID Act). Disclosers do not have to identify themselves – they may remain anonymous or use a pseudonym.

4b. The PID Act provides a means for protecting public officials, and former public officials, from adverse consequences of disclosing information that constitutes a public interest disclosure.