

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 300

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Staffing reductions

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator LUDWIG asked:

1. How many staff reductions/voluntary redundancies have occurred from 7 September 2013 to date? What was the reason for these reductions?
2. Were any of these reductions involuntary redundancies? If yes, provide details.
3. Are there any plans for further staff reductions/voluntary redundancies? If so, please provide details including if there is a reduction target, how this will be achieved, and if services/programs will be cut.
4. If there are plans for staff reductions, please give reason why these are happening.
5. Are there plans for involuntary redundancies? If yes provide details.

Answer:

1. During the period 7 September 2013 to 31 October 2013 there were 11 voluntary retrenchment payments made by the department. These officers and/or positions were deemed excess to requirements.
2. All of the retrenchments were voluntary.
3. On 18 November 2013, the department called for expressions of interest for voluntary retrenchment. The exact number of voluntary retrenchments will depend upon the extent of natural attrition and detailed budget and workforce planning for 2014–15. It is currently expected that around 220 voluntary retrenchments will be required in the next few months.
4. Staff reductions are required in order to address the financial sustainability of the department.
5. No.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 301

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Staffing recruitment

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator LUDWIG asked:

1. How many ongoing staff recruited from 7 September 2013 to date? What classification are these staff?
2. How many non-ongoing positions exist or have been created from 7 September 2013 to date? What classifications are these staff?
3. From 7 September 2013 to date, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

Answer:

1. From 7 September 2013 to 31 October 2013, seven permanent employees were recruited. The levels of these staff are: APS 6, EL 1, EL 2 and SES Band 1.
2. From 7 September 2013 to 31 October 2013, the department had 394 non-ongoing staff, including casual staff employed on an irregular or intermittent basis. Currently the department has non-ongoing staff at the following levels: APS 1, APS 2, APS 3, APS 4, APS 5, APS 6, EL 1, EL 2 and SES Band 2.
3. From 7 September 2013 to 31 October 2013, 15 non-ongoing employees were employed on contracts. The average length of non-ongoing contract is 3.6 months (this does not include casual employees).

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 302

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Organisation Chart on website

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

Can you confirm that the organisational chart on your website is up to date and reflects the current structure of the department? If there have been changes since the election can you detail exactly what those changes are?

Answer:

The organisational chart on the department's website reflects the current structure of the department. The chart is reviewed and updated, if necessary, on a monthly basis. As at 31 October 2013, there had been no changes to the department's structure since the election.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 303

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Fixed term contracts

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

I am also interested in the number of staff that are employed on fixed term contracts or are employed on a temporary basis?

Answer:

As at 31 October 2013, the Department of Agriculture employed a total of 394 people on a temporary basis. Of these, 299 people were employed on a casual-intermittent basis and 95 people were employed on a fixed term contract.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 304

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Appointments to the department

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

Have there been any appointments to the department since the election?

a) Who was appointed? What positions were they appointed to? What was the process followed and are they permanent or fixed term appointments?

Answer:

Yes. There have been employee appointments to the department, contractors engaged and one board appointment since the election which have been published in the Gazette.

The table at **Attachment A** details the employee engagements and contractor engagements. All departmental engagements were undertaken in accordance with departmental recruitment policy and procedures.

In addition to **Attachment A**, the Secretary Dr Paul Grimes, was appointed by the Governor General at the time of the change of Government.

Mr Hamish Millar was appointed to the Cotton Research and Development Corporation board as the Deputy chairperson. Under the *Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act 1989*, the minister appoints a nominated director as deputy chair after consulting with the chairperson. The current chair wrote to the minister, nominating Mr Millar on 23 August 2013. Mr Millar's term will end on 30 September 2014.

Question: 304 (continued)

The following table below details the positions of the engaged staff and their term of engagement.

Division/Region	Position	
ABARES	Research Officer	Non-ongoing specified term
ABARES	Senior Economist	Non-ongoing specified term
ABARES	Executive Assistant	Non-ongoing specified term
Agricultural Productivity	Policy Officer	Non-ongoing specified term
Agricultural Productivity	Assistant Director	Ongoing APS on temporary transfer (specified term)
Agricultural Productivity	Assistant Secretary	Ongoing employee (permanent)
Animal	Executive Assistant	Non-ongoing specified term
Border Compliance	Assistant Secretary	Ongoing employee (permanent)
Central East Region	On-Plant Vet	Non-ongoing casual/irregular
Executive	Executive Assistant	Ongoing employee (permanent)
Executive	Principal Government Lawyer	Ongoing employee (permanent)
Finance and Business Support	Payroll Officer	Non-ongoing specified term
Finance and Business Support	Senior Business Analyst	Non-ongoing specified term
Food	Senior Business Analyst	Non-ongoing specified term
Food	Executive Assistant	Non-ongoing specified term
Information Services	Analyst Programmer	Ongoing employee (permanent)
Information Services	Service Management Officer	Non-ongoing specified term
Information Services	Senior Business Analyst	Non-ongoing specified term
Information Services	Assistant Director	Ongoing employee (permanent)
People and Service Delivery	Project Officer	Non-ongoing specified term
People and Service Delivery	Project Officer	Non-ongoing specified term
North East Region	Food Safety Meat Assessor	Non-ongoing specified term
North East Region	On-Plant Veterinarian	Non-ongoing casual/irregular
North East Region	On-Plant Veterinarian	Non-ongoing casual/irregular
North East Region	On-Plant Veterinarian	Non-ongoing casual/irregular
Northern Region	Biosecurity Officer	Non-ongoing specified term
South East Region	Food Safety Meat Assessor	Non-ongoing casual/irregular
South East Region	On-Plant Veterinarian	Non-ongoing casual/irregular
South East Region	On-Plant Veterinarian	Non-ongoing casual/irregular
South East Region	On-Plant Veterinarian	Non-ongoing casual/irregular

Question: 304 (continued)

Division/Region	Position	
South East Region	On-Plant Veterinarian	Non-ongoing casual/irregular
Agricultural Adaptation and Forestry	Business Analyst	Contractor specified term
Finance and Business Support	Business Analyst	Contractor specified term
Governance	Web Publisher	Contractor specified term
Governance	Internal Auditor	Contractor specified term
Information Services	Developer	Contractor specified term
Information Services	Developer	Contractor specified term
Information Services	Developer	Contractor specified term
Information Services	Developer	Contractor specified term
Information Services	ICT Security Consultant	Contractor specified term
Information Services	Information Management/Architecture	Contractor specified term
People and Service Delivery	Business Analyst	Contractor specified term
People and Service Delivery	Test manager	Contractor specified term

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 305

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Reduction of staff numbers

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

1. Does the department have a target reduction number for reducing staff numbers in addition to 220 VRs?

a) Is that target based on actual staff numbers or is it based on a savings target?

Answer:

1. No. The extent of natural attrition and the completion of a more detailed budget and business planning for 2014–15 will determine whether any further voluntary retrenchments are required.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 306

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Government job cuts target

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

1. What are the mechanisms this department will employ to meet the Government's job cuts target?

a) Will the target be met through voluntary redundancies or will there be some compulsory redundancies as well – if so how many job cuts will come via compulsory redundancies

b) Has this department offered any packages to staff as a means of achieving the job cuts target?

Answer:

a) The department has no plans at this time to use involuntary redundancies.

b) The department has offered voluntary retrenchments to staff to meet existing budget targets.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 307

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Information provided to staff affected by VRs

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STRELE asked:

1. Can you provide detail of the information provided by the People Service Branch transition team to affected staff regarding VRs?
2. Have staff been given support and employment options information about who will be offered VRs and how the process will be conducted in addition to the email sent out on Friday 8 November 2013 by Dr Paul Grimes?

Answer:

1. A package of information was developed to assist staff to understand the voluntary retrenchment process and employee briefings were conducted nationally. **[Attachment A]**
2. Yes. Please refer to answer to Question 1.

Madden, Monica

Subject: FW: Invitation for Initial Expressions of Interest in Voluntary Retrenchment - Information Sessions [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

From: O'Brien, Lynne

Sent: Monday, 18 November 2013 2:21 PM

To: All DAFF (Aust. Wide)

Subject: Invitation for Initial Expressions of Interest in Voluntary Retrenchment [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Good afternoon

You will be aware there are a range of strategies in place to restore the department to a long-term sustainable footing. These include modernising and improving our service delivery, investing in better systems, prioritising our work, continuing to implement risk based interventions and reducing employee numbers.

As the Secretary has advised, the department has decided to undertake a voluntary retrenchment (VR) program to reduce staff numbers. The exact number of VRs will depend upon the extent of natural attrition and our more detailed budget and workforce planning for 2014-15. However, in the first instance, it is expected that around 220 VRs will be required in the next few months.

The purpose of this email is to invite initial expressions of interest (EOI) for a voluntary retrenchment from the department. This invitation is extended to all non SES employees across the department.

The VR program is to be managed in two phases:

- the first phase will focus on the Border Compliance Division in Canberra and the passengers, mail and cargo programs in the regions. Over the last few months, Regional Transition Committees and the division have undertaken extensive analysis and planning to support a workforce reduction in these areas whilst maintaining effective management of biosecurity risk. Expressions of interest for this first phase will be received up until 6 December 2013 with a view to progressing this round immediately thereafter.
- the second phase is open to non SES employees across department. Expressions of interest for the second phase will be received up until 31 January 2014. By this time the department will have had the opportunity to undertake further financial and business planning necessary to support this process. Whilst the invitation will remain open until the end of January, it would be appreciated if EOIs could be lodged earlier to assist with business planning considerations. A small number of VRs may be progressed during this period where a clear and immediate business case exists.

We may not be able to make offers to everyone who is interested as we have an obligation to maintain core skills and we must fulfil our obligations to manage funding carefully. Guiding Principles and Evaluation Criteria have been developed to be applied across the department. I encourage you to familiarise yourself with the Principles and Evaluation Criteria and also the other material on the Voluntary Retrenchment mylink page as you consider whether to submit an initial express an interest or not.

If you would like to express an interest in a VR, please complete the form Initial Expression of Interest for a Voluntary Retrenchment Stage 1 Form and email it to the Transition Team by:

- First Phase- 6 December 2013
- Second Phase- 31 January 2014

Information sessions will be held throughout the department this week to provide further information. The People Services team will provide further details shortly.

If you are unsure or require clarification about this EOI for VR invitation, please contact:

- the Transition Team by email or telephone 02 6272 5060; or
- your local people services team.

The team may receive a high volume of enquiries but will respond to you as quickly as they are able.

Lynne O'Brien
First Assistant Secretary
People and Service Delivery Division



Voluntary Retrenchment Guiding Principles and Evaluation Criteria

Context

There are a range of strategies in place to restore the department to a long-term sustainable footing. These include modernising and improving our service delivery, investing in better systems, prioritising our work, continuing to implement risk based interventions and reducing employee numbers.

In order to accelerate the reduction in employee numbers, the department is undertaking a voluntary retrenchment (VR) program. The program will be managed in such a way as to ensure workloads for remaining employees are sustainable and that we continue to deliver our core services effectively.

The program will be managed in two phases.

It will commence in the Border Compliance Division in Canberra and the passengers, mail and cargo programs in the regions. Over the last few months, Regional Transition Committees and the division have undertaken extensive analysis and planning to support workforce reduction whilst maintaining the effective management of biosecurity risk. Expressions of interest will be sought from relevant employees on Monday 18th November with a view to concluding this process as soon as practicable.

The second phase, open to all non SES departmental employees, will commence with an invitation to express an interest on Monday 18th November. This EOI process will remain open until the end of January 2014, at which time the department will have had the opportunity to undertake business and financial planning. A small number of VR's may be progressed during this period where a clear and immediate business case exists.

Guiding Principles

The department is committed to retaining a diverse and highly capable workforce with the capacity to deliver the Government's outcomes. The following guiding principles will be applied across the department's VR program:

- a. this VR program will apply to all non SES classification levels with the aim of achieving required employee levels and to maintain skills across the department;
- b. eligibility is based on the employee's substantive position;
- c. this is a voluntary process;
- d. VR's are not intended to be offered to employees as a reward for high performance or long service;

- e. there is no guarantee that all employees who express an interest will receive a VR (*refer Voluntary Retrenchment Evaluation Criteria*)- the department has an obligation to maintain key skills;
- f. the department will take into account the need to promote diversity in our workplaces;
- g. this EOI process does not represent any commitment or obligation by the department to offer a VR to those who express interest and it will not prevent other employees from being identified as excess; and
- h. this VR program will be managed consistent with the *Department of Agriculture Enterprise Agreement (DAFF EA) 2011-2014* and the APS Redeployment Principles.

Evaluation Criteria

Offers of VR will not be made to employees who:

- have submitted a formal notice of resignation or retirement;
- have skills in critical to the business or high demand job disciplines (e.g. technical specialists such as veterinarians).
- are currently on a period of probation;
- are non-ongoing and casual (irregular or intermittent) employees;
- are currently subject to a Performance Improvement Plan, in accordance with clause 78 of the DAFF EA, or Code of Conduct action, and might otherwise have their employment terminated under the provisions of s.29 of the *Public Services Act 1999*; or
- have an open worker's compensation claim.

The following will also be considered before supporting an offer of VR:

- employee's skills, knowledge and experience – if the employee has attributes that are critical to the department's capability that need to be retained;
- employee VR costs – if it would be a good financial business decision to offer a VR to one employee over another employee;
- leave without pay – the offer of a VR to an employee on extended leave without pay may not sufficiently reduce the department's employee costs; and
- diversity – the department is committed to promoting a balanced and diverse workforce. There is a need to ensure that diversity across the department is maintained.

Regional Managers/First Assistant Secretary's (RMs/FASs) will assess the Initial Expressions of Interest against the evaluation criteria. RMs/FASs will consult with other staff as required to make this assessment. They will decide which employees will be provided with their severance benefit, recreation, long service leave and ComSuper estimates.

[mylink](#) > [About the Department](#) > [Changes to the Department](#) > [Transition Program](#) > [Voluntary Retrenchment](#)

Voluntary Retrenchment

On 8 November the Secretary provided an [update on our budget situation](#) and announced that the department would be undertaking a voluntary retrenchment (VR) program.

The program has now commenced and information is available to explain how it will work and what it might mean for you.

About the program

The program has two phases:

- Phase 1: for the Border Compliance Division in Canberra and its passengers, mail and cargo programs in the regions.

The deadline for expressions of interest for this stream is Friday 6 December.

- Phase 2: for all other employees.

The deadline for expressions of interest for this stream is Friday 31 January.

These two phases are based on the need for business and financial planning to inform and support the workforce reduction. Extensive analysis and consultation has been undertaken in the phase one areas of our business through the [Transition Program](#). More time is needed to undertake this work in the other areas of our business.

More information

- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [VR process map](#)
- [Process timeline](#)
- [Principles and evaluation criteria](#)
- [Payments guideline](#)
- [Restriction period guideline](#)

Questions and concerns?

For more information about the [Transition Program](#) visit the [mylink](#) page or your regional [mylink](#) page.

You can also contact the [Transition Team](#) by email or telephone 02 6272 **5060**.

Your local people services team is always available to provide you with information and support.

If you have any concerns about the transition process, you are encouraged to take the time to speak with your manager. Alternatively you can contact the department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP):

- email: [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- website [PPC Online](#)
- telephone 1300 361 008 from anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local call
- out of hours or crisis assistance calls +61 2 9232 7249.

Maintained by: Workplace Relations - Transition



Transition Program – Voluntary Retrenchment Program Questions and Answers

About VRs

What is a Voluntary Retrenchment or VR?

When an employee has been declared excess to requirements by the delegate, they can elect to accept a voluntary retrenchment (VR), which means that they will be paid a severance benefit and their employment with the department will be terminated.

Can I be forced to take a VR?

No, you cannot be forced to take a VR.

Who is eligible for a VR under this program?

All ongoing non SES employees may apply for a VR under this program. However specific eligibility requirements are set out in the Principles and Evaluation Criteria.

How will the department decide who to offer VRs to?

A range of factors will be considered in deciding who to make offers to, including:

- principles based on the department's commitment to retain a diverse and highly capable workforce with the capacity to deliver the government's outcomes will guide decision makers
- a set of evaluation criteria that outline eligibility for a VR
- other considerations such as the employees' skills, knowledge, experience and VR costs.

These are all detailed in the Principles and Evaluation Criteria.

Who makes the decision?

RMs/FASs will assess the Initial Expressions of Interest against the evaluation criteria. They will decide which employees will be provided with their severance benefit, recreation, long service leave and ComSuper estimates.

Assistant Secretary, People Services Branch holds the delegations to make an offer of VR.

Individual employees decide if they want to submit an expression of interest and accept any offer made to them.

Is there an alternative to a VR if I'm identified as being excess?

Only employees who elect to be offered a VR (through a Formal Expression of Interest) will be made excess through this VR program.

Making an expression of interest for a VR under this program

How do I submit an initial expression of interest?

If you think you might be interested in a VR, you need to complete the 'Initial Expression of Interest for Voluntary Retrenchment (Stage 1)' form and email it to the Transition Team.

When do I need to submit my initial expression of interest by?

The deadline for employees in the Border Compliance Division in Canberra and the passengers, mail and cargo programs in the regions is **Friday 6 December**.

The deadline for all other employees is **Friday 31 January**.

What happens to my initial expression of interest?

RMs/FASs will assess the Initial Expressions of Interest against the evaluation criteria. They will decide which employees will be provided with severance benefit, recreation, long service leave and ComSuper estimates.

You will be advised by your RM/FAS whether or not your Initial Expression of Interest has been supported, together with reasons.

When can I get financial advice in relation to taking a VR?

If your Initial Expression of Interest has been supported by your RM/FAS, and you are still considering a VR, the department encourages you to seek independent professional financial advice. You can seek advice at any time prior to any VR offer being made by the delegate (so long as you are an employee whose Initial Expression of Interest has been supported).

The department will reimburse you for financial advice received up to a maximum of \$700. Reimbursement will then be provided on proof of expenditure (e.g. original paid tax invoice), and payment will be progressed using an employee reimbursement form forwarded to Accounts Payable.

Can I apply for a VR if I have already given notice that I intend to resign or retire in the near future?

No, an expression of interest for a VR will not be considered or approved if you have already given notice of resignation or retirement from the department. The department has an obligation under the Financial Management and Accountability Act to manage public funding efficiently and ethically.

This includes meeting the Australian community's expectation that VRs will not be used to provide an additional benefit where an Australian Government employee has already indicated an intention to retire or resign.

Can I change my mind and withdraw from the EOI process?

Yes, expressions of interest for VRs can be withdrawn at any time up until the date that a VR offer is made to you by the delegate.

Will withdrawing affect my employment with the department?

No, the VR process is completely separate from all other matters relating to your employment.

VR offers

Does the department have to offer a VR to someone who has submitted an EOI?

No, the department considers a range of factors in making its decision and the EOI process does not represent any commitment or obligation by the department to offer a VR to those who express interest and it will not prevent other staff from being identified as excess.

You can read more about these in the [Principles and Evaluation Criteria](#).

When will VR offers be made?

VR offers for phase one will be made through January and February and through March and April for phase two. Only employees who formally elect (by the due date) to request an offer of VR by submitting a *Formal Expression of Interest for VR (Stage 2)* Form will be considered by the delegate for VR offers.

What happens if I decline a VR offer from the delegate?

If you are offered a VR it is taken that you are excess to the department's requirements. If you decline the offer the excess employee status will stand and a Retention Period as required by the [enterprise agreement](#) will commence.

It is for this reason that consideration of your estimates and financial advice and the opportunity to submit a *Formal Expression of Interest (Stage 2)* Form prior to being made a VR offer are critical.

If I take a VR how long do I have to wait before I am eligible to take another job in the Australian Public Service (APS)?

You will need to wait up to a maximum of 36 weeks. To calculate the period that would be applicable for you see the [restriction period guideline](#).

Does this time frame also apply to state government positions?

No, the restriction period only applies to APS positions.

VR Calculations

How do I calculate how much money I would be eligible to be paid?

Once RMs/FASs have assessed the Initial Expressions of Interest against the evaluation criteria, they will decide which employees will be provided with their severance benefit, recreation, long service leave and ComSuper estimates.

Employees can also use the [VR Payments guideline](#) to assist in this process.

Does my prior service count when calculating my retrenchment?

Continuous service with Commonwealth departments and agencies counts for the severance benefit.

Please note that service with the ACT Government prior to 1 July 1994 will count. Post 1994 ACT Government service does not count so your VR will be calculated from the first day of continuous service with a Commonwealth agency.

Service with all other state governments is not recognised in the severance benefit calculation. Further information is available in the [VR Payments guideline](#).

I have less than 10 years of service and am therefore not eligible for Long Service Leave. How does the Long Service that I have accrued count towards my VR?

Accrued Long Service Leave (completed years and months) is included in VR calculations provided you have at least one year of service. All employees accrue nine days Long Service Leave per completed year of service which is pro-rated for part-time work.

I work part-time, how does this impact upon my VR calculation?

VRs are calculated on actual service and part time service is calculated pro-rata. This includes the calculation of Long Service Leave accumulated while working part time hours.

Severance pay includes an element for each period of full-time and part-time service.

For example, a person who's worked 8 years full-time and 2 years part-time (3 days per week or 0.6 FTE) will have:

- 8 years @ 2 weeks/year = 16 weeks
- 2 years @ 2 weeks/year * 0.6 = 2.4 weeks

Total of 18.4 weeks would be paid at their full-time salary.

What are the tax implications for receiving a VR?

Each component of a VR attracts specific tax provisions. These amounts will appear as Lump Sum payments on your payment summary. They will be categorised separately in accordance with tax legislation. For further information on tax as it applies to VRs, see [VR Payments guideline](#)- what are the taxation considerations.

Will the department give me the chance to optimise my taxation options and/or pension options re birthdays in relation to the VR payment being made in the new financial year or later.

No. The department must progress VRs in a timely manner and not artificially make changes to exit dates. However the department will comply with relevant legislation.

The VR program and the department

Why is the department doing a phased approach to VRs?

The department's VR program commences with a whole of department call for expression of interest in a VR on Monday, 18 November 2013.

The program will be managed in two phases, with the first phase in the Border Compliance Division in Canberra and the passengers, mail and cargo programs in the regions. This phase builds on the work performed over the last few months where Regional Transition Committees and the division have undertaken extensive analysis and planning to support a workforce reduction whilst maintaining the effective management of biosecurity risk.

The second phase also opens on 18 November 2013 to gauge the level of interest for all other non SES remaining employees in the department. This EOI process will remain open until 31 January 2014, at which time the department will have a better understanding of next year's budget which will inform the level of reductions needed. However, a small number of VR's may be progressed during this period where a clear and immediate business case exists.

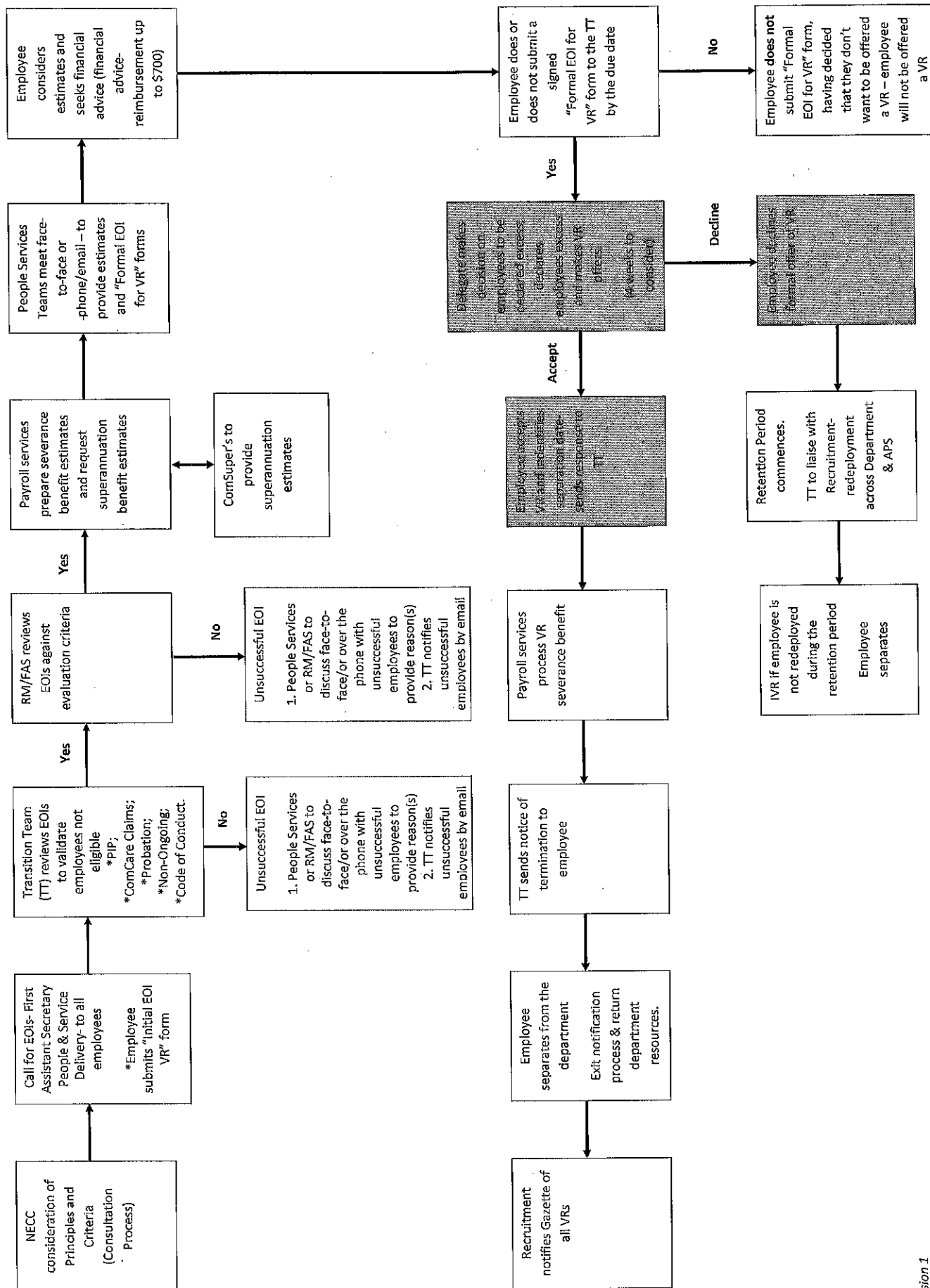
What will happen if the VR expression of interest is oversubscribed?

Offering a VR is entirely at the discretion of the department. While consideration of implications for individuals is important, the department needs to ensure that we retain the workforce and skills needed to achieve core business outcomes and deliver the Government's agenda.

The EOI process does not represent any commitment or obligation by the department to offer a VR to those who express interest and it will not prevent other staff from being identified as excess.

Note: the information provided in this document is for information only and, whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and consistency, it does not override the provisions of the Enterprise Agreement 2011-2014, the Public Service Act 1999, Fair Work Act 2009 and any other relevant legislation.

Transition Program- Voluntary Retrenchment Process Map





Transition Program – Voluntary Retrenchment Indicative Process Flow Timeline

Process	BCD/regional timeline	Whole of department timeline
NECC to consider process, principles and criteria	Thursday 14 November	
*Advice to all employees concerning process, principles and criteria *Employee briefings commence	Monday 18 November	
* Call for Initial EOIs (stage 1) *Commence issuing letters to employees on leave/transfer	Monday 18 November	
*People Services to validate and assess eligibility against criteria	Progressively	
*Initial EOI closes	Friday 6 December	Friday 31 January 2014
*RMs/FASs will assess the initial expressions of interest against the evaluation criteria. They will decide which employees will be provided with their severance benefit, recreation, long service leave and ComSuper estimates *Employees not supported advised, together with reasons	Friday 13 December	Friday 7 February
Payroll prepare severance benefit estimates and request ComSuper superannuation estimates	Friday 3 January	Friday 28 February
*Estimates provided to employees *Employees can seek financial advice *Employees have 3 weeks to consider to submit their Formal EOI (stage 2)	Friday 10 January	Friday 7 March
Close date for employee to submit their Formal EOI (stage 2)	Friday 31 January	Friday 28 March
Formal offers of VR made (up to 4 weeks to accept/decline)	Friday 7 February	Friday 4 April
Latest date that an employee can accept an offer	Friday 7 March	Friday 2 May
Employee notification period- latest that an employee can separate from the department (4 or 5 weeks)	Friday 11 April	Friday 6 June



Guideline- Voluntary Retrenchment Payments

A Severance Benefit comprises two weeks pay for each completed year of service plus a pro-rata payment for subsequent months of service.

Years of service (APS) – refer to the table below to estimate the number of weeks' severance based on your years of service.

Length of Service	Department of Agriculture- Severance Benefit
Less than 1 year	4 weeks
At least 1 year but less than 2 years	4 weeks
At least 2 years but less than 3 years	6 weeks based on the NES
At least 3 years but less than 4 years	7 weeks + pro rata based on the NES
At least 4 years but less than 5 years	8 weeks + pro rata
At least 5 years but less than 6 years	10 weeks + pro rata
At least 6 years but less than 7 years	12 weeks + pro rata
At least 7 years but less than 8 years	14 weeks + pro rata
At least 8 years but less than 9 years	16 weeks + pro rata
At least 9 years but less than 10 years	18 weeks + pro rata
At least 10 years but less than 11 years	20 weeks + pro rata
11 years or more	2 weeks for every year of service up a max of 48 weeks

Years of service (APS) – please refer to the table below to calculate an estimate of your severance benefit.

Estimate includes:	Number of Weeks
Department of Agriculture Severance Benefit- To calculate an estimate of the approx number of weeks, refer to the table above.	
Payment in lieu of Notice – Either 4 weeks salary, or five weeks if you are over 45 years of age and have at least 5 years' continuous service. *receive payment in lieu of notice for the unexpired portion of the notice period	
Recreation leave in weeks	
Long Service leave (for employees with a minimum of 1 years service) months and days (paid in weeks)	
Total weeks:	

Annual Salary \$.....divided by 52 weeks = \$.....per week

Total weeks.....times \$.....per week = \$..... VR estimate

Note: this does not take into account any extenuating circumstances which will impact on pay rate and or years of service. For example leave without pay, part time service, additional personal leave or service with other government agencies etc. See further information below:

What are the taxation considerations?

Voluntary retrenchment payments are tax-free up to a limit calculated according to the years of service – that is indexed by the ATO.

Is terminology the same across organisations?

No. Your VR may be referred to as an involuntary redundancy, involuntary retrenchment or involuntary retirement (e.g. ComSuper estimates refer to involuntary retirement).

What if I have worked part-time?

The VR severance benefit will be calculated on a pro-rata basis for any period where an employee has worked part-time hours during his or her period of service and the employee has less than 24 years full time service, subject to any minimum amount the employee is entitled to under the National Employment Standards.

What other periods of service will count towards an estimate?

- service in the department;
- government service as defined in section 10 of the *Long Service Leave Act 1976*;
- service with the Commonwealth (other than service with a Joint Commonwealth-State body corporate in which the Commonwealth has a controlling interest) which is recognised for Long Service Leave purposes;
- service with the Australian Defence Forces;
- APS service which immediately preceded a woman being required to resign because she married, as was specified in repealed section 49 of the repealed *Public Service Act 1922*, assuming that service has not previously been recognised for severance pay purposes; and
- service in another organisation where:
 - an employee was transferred from the APS to that organisation with a transfer of function; or
 - an employee engaged by that organisation on work within a function is appointed as a result of the transfer of that function to the APS; and
 - such service is recognised for Long Service Leave purposes.

For earlier periods of service to count there must be no breaks between the periods of service, except where:

- the break in service is less than one month and occurs where an offer of employment with the new employer was made and accepted by the employee before ceasing employment with the preceding employer; or
- the earlier period of service was with the APS and ceased because the employee was deemed to have resigned from the APS on marriage under the repealed section 49 of the repealed *Public Service Act 1922*.

Any period of service which ceased by way of any of the grounds for termination specified in section 29 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (including any additional grounds prescribed in the Public Service Regulations); or on a ground equivalent to any of these grounds; or voluntary retrenchment at or above the minimum retiring age applicable to the employee; or with the payment of an employer-financed retrenchment benefit; will not count as service for severance pay purposes.

Absences from work which do not count as service for Long Service Leave purposes will not count as service for severance pay purposes.



Guideline –Restriction Period from the Australian Public Service (APS)

Accepting Retrenchment and Returning to the APS

If you accept a voluntary retrenchment (VR) package you will be subject to a restriction period (or the retrenchment benefit period) which is a period of time when you cannot work for the Australian Public Service (APS).

The restriction period is calculated by the number of weeks used to calculate your severance benefit minus any National Employment Standards (NES) component.

Restriction Period by Years of Service

Years of Service	Restriction Period No. of Weeks
Under 1 year	0
1 + pro rata	0
2 + pro rata	0
3 + pro rata	0
4 + pro rata	0
5 + pro rata	0
6 + pro rata	1
7 + pro rata	1
8 + pro rata	2
9 + pro rata	2
10 + pro rata	8
11 + pro rata	10
12 + pro rata	12
13 + pro rata	14
14 + pro rata	16
15 + pro rata	18
16 + pro rata	20
17 + pro rata	22
18 + pro rata	24
19 + pro rata	26
20 + pro rata	28
21 + pro rata	30
22 + pro rata	32
23 + pro rata	34
24+	36



Transition Program- Initial Expression of Interest for Voluntary Retrenchment Form (Stage 1)

I wish to express my initial interest in being considered for an offer of voluntary retrenchment (VR) under the voluntary retrenchment provisions contained in Clause 89 of the *Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Enterprise Agreement 2011-14 (DAFF EA) 2 stages (EOI process)*.

I understand that this EOI process does not represent any commitment or obligation by the department to offer a VR to those who express interest and that it will not prevent other staff from being identified as excess. In submitting this initial expression of interest I understand that:

- It will be treated as strictly confidential and not prejudice my employment with the Department of Agriculture;
- It will be provided to my Regional Manager/First Assistant Secretary (RMs/FASs) who will assess it against the *Voluntary Retrenchment Evaluation Criteria*. RMs/FASs will consult with other staff as required to make this assessment.
- It may be withdrawn by me at any time before a VR offer is made by the delegate;
- If my Initial Expression of Interest is supported by my RM/FAS, I will be provided with my severance benefit, recreation and long service leave and ComSuper estimates to assist my consideration before I express my interest formally under Stage 2 of the EOI process
- If my initial expression of interest is not supported by my Regional Manager/First Assistant Secretary I will be advised of the reasons for this decision;
- Seeking professional financial advice is important to my decision making;
- If I am invited to accept a VR by the delegate (following my formal expression of interest at Stage 2), I will be declared excess to the department's requirements and if I decline the offer then my excess employee status will stand and a Retention Period will be activated in accordance with the DAFF EA; and
- Information I provide will not be retained by the Department of Agriculture for any purpose other than the current VR program.

The details that I have provided below are a true reflection of my employment status with the department.

SIGNED:		FULL NAME:	
DATE:		AGS NUMBER:	
REGION:		PROGRAM / DIVISION/SECTION:	
SUBSTANTIVE CLASSIFICATION:		POSITION NUMBER:	
SUPERANNUATION PROVIDER*		EMAIL ADDRESS:	
CONTACT PHONE NUMBER:		POSTAL ADDRESS:	

*This may be ComSuper or another Superannuation provider. To submit your expression of interest for a VR, please complete this form, scan and email it to transitionteam@daff.gov.au no later than 5pm on **Friday 6th December 2013** for phase one Border Compliance Division or 5pm **Friday 31st January 2014** for phase two whole of the department.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 308

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Forced redundancies

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

1. If there aren't sufficient EOI for VRs will the department undertake forced redundancies?

Answer:

1. The department has no plans to undertake involuntary retrenchments at this time.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 309

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Executive Coaching and Leadership Training

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator LUDWIG asked:

1. In relation to executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by each department/agencies, please provide the following information from 7 September 2013 to date:

- a) Total spending on these services.
2. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification.
3. The number of employees who have utilised these services, their employment classification and how much study leave each employee was granted (provide a breakdown for each employment classification).
4. The names of all service providers engaged.

For each service purchased from a provider listed under (4), please provide:

- a) The name and nature of the service purchased
 - b) Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
 - c) The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification
 - d) The total number of hours involved for all employees (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
 - e) The total amount spent on the service
 - f) A description of the fees charged (ie per hour, complete package).
5. Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises, please provide:
- a) The location used

Question: 309 (continued)

- b) The number of employees who took part on each occasion (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
- c) The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part (provide a breakdown for each employment classification)
- d) Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location.

Answer:

1. The total spending on all executive coaching and/or other leadership training for the period 7 September to 31 October 2013 was \$82 289.25. The following table reflects the breakdown:

Agency	Expenditure
Department of Agriculture	\$28 232.25
Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)	\$1 785.00
Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)	\$52 272.00
Cotton Research & Development Corporation (CRDC)	\$0.00
Fisheries Research & Development Corporation (FRDC)	\$0.00
Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC)	\$0.00
Grape & Wine Research & Development Corporation (GWRDC)	\$0.00
Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC)	\$0.00
Wine Australia (WA)	\$0.00

Note: The Sugar Research & Development Corporation was closed on 30 September 2013.

Question: 309 (continued)

2. Executive coaching is available to executive level employees. Generally, leadership training is available to employees at the APS5 (or equivalent) and above classification.

3. 89 employees utilised these services. The following table represents their employment classification:

Agency	APS5	APS6	EL1	EL2	SES1	SES2	SES3	Total utilised
Dept. of Agriculture	0	0	0	3	31	16	0	50
AFMA	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
APVMA	0	0	3	26	7	0	0	36
CRDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FRDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GWRDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RIRDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Under the department's Studybank guidelines, study leave is not available for this class of training.

4. The names of all executive coaching and leadership training services providers are:

- Australian Public Service Commission
- Bull & Bear Special Assignments
- CEB SHL Talent Measurement
- Directions for Change
- Tempo Strategies
- Australian Institute of Company Directors.

4. a), b), c), d), e), and f) – please refer to **Attachment A**.

Question: 309 (continued)

5.

a) The following locations were used where a service was provided at a location other than the department's/agencies' own premises:

- Australian Federal Police Headquarters – Darwin NT
- Australian Public Service Commission, Woden ACT
- Australian War Memorial, Campbell ACT
- Federal Golf Course, Red Hill ACT
- The Boathouse by the Lake, Barton ACT.

b) One employee took part on each occasion.

c) The total number of hours involved for employees who took part in training at an external location was 93.5 hours. The following table reflects the breakdown by employment classification:

Agency	APS5	APS6	EL1	EL2	SES1	SES2	SES3	Total
Dept of Agriculture	0	0	0	53	3	15	0	71
AFMA	0	22.5	0	0	0	0	0	22.5
APVMA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CRDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FRDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GWRDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RIRDC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

d) There were no additional costs incurred to use these locations.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture Error! Unknown document property name.Error! Unknown document property name.Error! Unknown document property name.

Question: 309

Provider	Course	Nature		no. of participants	Employment classification						Hours by classification						per hour/ complete package	Total hours	Total cost (\$)
					APS5	APS6	EL1	EL2	SES1	SES2	APS5	APS6	EL1	EL2	SES1	SES2			
APSC	LAFIA Asia	leadership training course	group based	1						1						15	complete package	15	0*
Directions for Change	SES Development Program - coaching	executive coaching session	one-to-one	14						14						14	per hour	14	7042.00
Directions for Change	SES Development Program - coaching	executive coaching session	one-to-one	27					27						27		per hour	27	8784.00
APSC	Coaching and Developing others	leadership training course	group based	1				1						15			complete package	15	0**
APSC	Leadership Conversation Series	leadership training course	group based	1					1						1		complete package	1	115.00
APSC	Leadership Conversation Series	leadership training course	group based	1					1						2		complete package	2	115.00
Australian Institute for Company Directors	Company Director's Course	leadership training course	group based	1				1						38			complete package	38	6025.00
Bull&Bear Special Assignments	Executive Coaching	executive coaching session	one-to-one	1						1						5	per hour	5	1750.00
Bull&Bear Special Assignments	Executive Coaching	executive coaching session	one-to-one	1					1						5		per hour	5	1750.00
Bull&Bear Special Assignments	Executive Coaching	executive coaching session	one-to-one	1					1						6		per hour	6	2100.00
Tempo Strategies	Executive Coaching	executive coaching session	one-to-one	1				1						1.5			complete package	1.5	551.25
APSC	EL 1 transition	leadership training course	group based	1		1						7.5					complete package	7.5	595.00
APSC	EL 1 transition	leadership training course	group based	1		1						7.5					complete package	7.5	595.00
APSC	EL 1 transition	leadership training course	group based	1		1						7.5					complete package	7.5	595.00
CEB SHL Talent Measurement	Customised leadership development program	leadership training course	group based	33			3	26	4				72	720	122		complete package	914	51,966.00
CEB SHL Talent Measurement	Customised leadership development program	leadership training course	one-to-one	3					3						3		complete package	3	306.00
TOTAL																			82,289.25

*Expenditure incurred prior to 7 September 2013.

**APSC pilot course. No cost incurred.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 310

Division/Agency: People and Service Delivery Division

Topic: Staffing Cessations

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator LUDWIG asked:

1. How many ongoing staff left the department/agency from 7 September 2013 to date? What classification were these staff?
2. How many non-ongoing staff left department/agency from 7 September 2013 to date? What classification were these staff?

Answer:

1. and 2. Please refer to **Attachment A** for details of ongoing and non-ongoing staff who have left the department and its portfolio agencies in the period 7 September 2013 to 31 October 2013.

During the period 7 September 2013 to 31 October 2013, one ongoing and one non-ongoing employee left Wine Australia. Wine Australia does not employ under the Australian Public Service classification structure.

List of abbreviations

AFMA – Australian Fisheries Management Authority

APVMA – Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

RIRDC – Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

CRDC – Cotton Research and Development Corporation

FRDC – Fisheries Research and Development Corporation

GRDC – Grains Research and Development Corporation

GWRDC – Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation

Question: 310 (continued)

classification	Department of Agriculture		AFMA		APVMA		RIRDC		CRDC/FRDC/ GRDC/ GWRDC
	ongoing	non-ongoing	ongoing	non-ongoing	ongoing	non-ongoing	ongoing	non-ongoing	
APS 1		3							
APS 2				1					
APS 3	6								
APS 4	2	2							
APS 5	4	1							
APS 6	3	2	2		1		1		
EL 1	9		2						
EL 2	5				1			1	
SES Band 1	1				1				
Secretary	1								
Total	31	8	4	1	3		1	1	NIL