

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2012
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 1

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Pg 56 (14/02/2012)

Topic: Franchise Advisory Council

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ: I know that is what it does now, but when Australia Post was busy selling the franchises, were representations made that there would be a specific franchise advisory council?

Ms Corbett: I am happy to take that on notice.

Senator ABETZ: In the negotiations and memoranda of understanding or contracts with the various banks, does Australia Post get an accredited franchise status?

Mr Fahour: We will take that on notice.

Senator ABETZ: Thank you—and whether Australia Post has entered such types of agreements with financial institutions in relation to these matters.

Answer:

Australia Post has not established a Franchisee Advisory Council, to date. Australia Post advised prospective franchisees at induction sessions that a Franchisee Advisory Council would be established until there were a sufficient number of franchised outlets.

Australia Post understands “accredited franchise status” to refer to the practice of the financial institutions accrediting franchise business models. Australia Post has relationships with a number of financial institutions whereby they will recognise through their lending practices their accreditation of the licensed post office/franchise post office business models. These relationships are separate from any agency agreements that might exist between a financial institution and Australia Post.

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Question No: 2

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Pg 56 (14/02/2012)

Topic: Coorparoo Franchise

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ: I want to move to the Coorparoo franchise. Do you have any details in relation to that?

Ms Corbett: What would you like to know?

Senator ABETZ: I understand it closed last year. What are the circumstances surrounding the closure? I understand there were certain issues surrounding it, which have now put a small businessperson into substantial financial stress.

Ms Corbett: Have you got a specific question with regard to the—

Senator ABETZ: If you do not have specific information, I will put specific questions on notice in relation to that.

Ms Corbett: Yes, I am happy to take the specific questions on notice.

Answer:

Australia Post was forced to relocate the Coorparoo Post Office in May 2011 because of the shopping centre owner's decision to redevelop the centre. The outlet was moved approximately 700 metres from its previous location.

The Coorparoo franchisee elected to terminate their Franchise Agreement with Australia Post in lieu of relocating to the new premises. In line with the terms of the Franchise Agreement, which is explained to the prospective franchisee, and which they acknowledge as part of the interview and selection process, the "exit" payment formula within the Agreement was used to determine an equitable financial settlement between the franchisee and Australia Post.

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Question No: 3

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Page 59 (14/02/2012)

Topic: Statistics on Customer Complaints for lost parcels

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD: I am talking about ordinary postal things, not your yellow envelopes or registered mail, just ordinary mail. And they are items that are \$5, \$10, \$15 and \$35. One or two missing? So what. But there is a systematic or systemic loss in the Townsville region, a systemic delay. What I am really asking you is: do you keep statistics? You said: yes. Can you tell me, and I will accept this on notice, customers complaints received last year for articles going missing—

Mr Fahour: In Townsville?

Senator IAN MACDONALD: In Queensland and in Townsville, if you have those. You told me that the on-time stats for the Townsville to Brisbane delivery are two per cent below the national average. Is there an explanation for that? Perhaps you could take that on notice. Could you also give me the delivery-on-time figures for Townsville to Brisbane for the year 2010-11? And do you have sample results from one region to another? The instance I would like to know about is Townsville to Mackay rather than Townsville to Brisbane.

Mr Fahour: We will get those to you, as you wish.

Answer:

For comparison purposes, Australia Post handled over 5 billion mail items during 2010/11. During the same period, there were:

- 11,446 *complaints about lost mail posted to Queensland* (0.0002% of total items handled); and
- 106 *complaints about lost mail posted to Townsville* (0.000002% of total items handled).

During 2010/11, external monitoring reported *on-time delivery performance* of 96.9% for the mail path Townsville-Mackay and 100% for the mail path Townsville-Brisbane, against the prescribed performance standard of 94%.

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Question No: 4

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Pg 59 (14/02/2012)

Topic: Delivery Service in Marian, Nabilla Qld

Senator MacDonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Thank you for your answers about the PO boxes at a place, in the Marian area, called Nabilla. You tell me that you are going to have a poll of the 800 residents. The last poll was taken in 1996. If the poll shows that small community of 800 wants a delivery service, how long before it would be implemented? Do you have a rough estimate?

Mr Burke: I can take that on notice but I suggest it would be a couple of weeks. Once we can identify the appropriate contractor and once we can ensure that the residents have an appropriate receptacle for the parcel to be delivered to. But I will clarify that in writing for you.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Good. I take it you have agreed to do the poll. Perhaps on notice you could tell me when that is likely to happen.

Mr Burke: Absolutely.

Answer:

Australia Post conducted a mail delivery poll in Marian over the four-week period, Monday 20 February to Friday 16 March 2012.

822 polling letters were delivered and 407 or 49.5% were returned with a "Yes" vote in favour of a change to the current delivery arrangements. Residents who wanted to retain the existing delivery arrangements (ie did not want a new street delivery service implemented) were not required to return the polling letter.

As majority support is required for the introduction of a delivery service, the current delivery arrangements will remain unchanged for the time being.

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Question No: 5

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Pg 59 (14/02/2012)

Topic: Closure of Innot Hot Springs Post Office

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD: A post office was shut at Innot Hot Springs, up on the western Atherton Tablelands. I suspect you may not have this in front of you but could you indicate to me—perhaps on notice—the reason it was closed, what options have been offered to those who used that post office, whether there are post office boxes available and what the closest post office now is for those people?

Mr Burke: We will do that for you.

Answer:

Innot Hot Springs was a Community Postal Agency (CPA) that ceased trading on 30 June 2010 after the agreement was terminated by the agent.

This is a small town with only two commercial businesses – the roadhouse that accommodated the CPA and the local hotel. Both are owned by the former operator of the CPA. There are no other businesses in the town in which to relocate the CPA services.

Local residents can access postal services at Mt Garnet Post Office to the east or Ravenshoe Post Office to the west, approximately 15km and 20km away respectively. Residents were given the option of having a post office box at Mr Garnet or a 2-day per week street delivery service.

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Question No: 6

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Pg 60 (14/02/2012)

Topic: Bundarra Post Office

Senator Williams asked:

Senator WILLIAMS: Thank you, Chair. Mr Fahour, I will go back to where I was some months ago. Last October in estimates, I raised the plight of the post offices at Bandara and Attunga in New England of New South Wales. Since then Australia Post has negotiated with Mrs Garrad at Bandara Post Office to stay open for another six months, and I believe at Attunga the owner has come back to operate the post office. So I thank you for your continued support there. But with Bundarra it will be a battle to make it a success and I have encouraged locals to support the business. I presume any stationery or merchandise that Bundarra Post Office stocks the owner would have to pay for that stock on delivery. Is that the case?

Ms Corbett: Yes, that is the case.

Senator WILLIAMS: As part of its efforts to make this business viable, would you ever consider, at least for a six-month trial period, offering stationery on consignment so that then Mrs Garrad would pay for that stock once she has sold them? Would that be possible?

Ms Corbett: We are in active discussions at a local area basis with Mrs Garrad. I am happy to take it on notice and see where those discussions have got to. But certainly, it is in Australia Post's best interests, as it is in the individual licensee's interest, to ensure sustainability. So we are happy to look at a number of opportunities to do so.

Answer:

Australia Post is committed to supporting Ms Garrad to ensure the ongoing viability of the Bundarra LPO. Ms Garrad is not required to pay for stock up front, is not subject to the standard minimum ordering requirements and is being supported with ongoing point of sale material, product information guides, merchandising displays and signage. Sales performance through the Christmas period showed encouraging results.

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Question No: 7

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Pg 61 (14/02/2012)

Topic: When is the Final Review Scheduled?

Senator Williams asked:

Senator WILLIAMS: So if Mrs Garrad did have to close the post office, you are confident there would be a local outlet there somewhere in Bandarra, just being a small community?

Ms Corbett: We make sure we exhaust all efforts, and that is really extensive.

Senator WILLIAMS: If that is not achieved then they would have to make Inverell, the nearest town, their base, I would imagine.

Ms Corbett: That is what we discuss with the community. But, as I said, there is a long way to go before we have to reach that conclusion.

Senator WILLIAMS: Goodo. When is the final review scheduled?

Ms Corbett: I am happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

The six-month trial commenced at the beginning of January and a final review will be conducted at the end of June 2012. Australia Post will continue to work closely with Ms Garrad over the coming months to provide ongoing support and guidance.

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Question No: 8

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Page 62 (14/02/2012)

Topic: Performance Statistics

Senator Fisher asked:

Senator FISHER: So in answer to Senator Macdonald, I think you indicated that arrival rates were better than 90 per cent. Was that of parcels?

Mr Fahour: No. What I indicated was that our performance statistics, which would be measured on an annual basis, which the senator mentioned, for the specific area he was asking for, which is Queensland, was the 95 per cent number for the year 2010-11. He asked me for the year 2010-11 whether I could give him some other statistics. We would be happy to also give you the Adelaide ones, if you would like them.

Answer:

For comparison purposes, Australia Post handled over 5 billion mail items during 2010/11. During the same period, there were:

- 3277 *complaints about lost items posted to South Australia* (0.00006 % of total items handled); and
- 179 *complaints about lost items posted to Adelaide* (0.000003% of total items handled).

During 2010/11, external monitoring reported *on-time delivery performance of 96% across all mail paths into Adelaide*, against the prescribed performance standard of 94%.

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Question No: 9

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Page 62 (14/02/2012)

Topic: Misdelivery of Parcels

Senator Fisher asked:

Senator FISHER: Yes, please. I will come to you with this particular circumstance, after the event, but suffice to say it involves misdelivery of mail and parcels to apartment recipients. It involves people not getting a first notice of a parcel, people getting a final notice of a parcel when they have not had the first notice, people have a final notice delivered to them after the goods have already been returned, in this case to an address in Melbourne, and it involves, in the case of one particular constituent, the goods never been recovered—the first was overseas registered mail from Thai Airways and the second was a book from Melbourne—and no apology, to refer to your earlier answer, ever having been given to the constituent. My question in those circumstances is: when a parcel is allegedly not delivered and the recipient complains about it, is it correct that only the sender of parcel can lodge the complaint and, if so, why?

Mr Fahour: I will take part of your question on notice and I will answer part of it. As I mentioned earlier to Senator Macdonald, in excess of 99 per cent of all parcels end up where they are supposed to end up. Very unfortunately and very occasionally, some are lost in the system where we handle 20 million items every day. To the extent that we discover we have misplaced a parcel, despite the good intention of all people, then I would expect as a bare minimum an apology and sometimes you will find that we make financial good even though we have no obligation to. I will come back to you, Senator, in answering the other question, and lay out for you the process of who can complain, the way that we get documentation about the sender and the process in following up on that question.

Senator FISHER: So do you require the sender to complain or not?

CHAIR: Senator Fisher—

Senator FISHER: Mr Fahour has not answered my question.

Answer:

The General Post Guide (section G6.2), which is available online at www.auspost.com.au, states the following:

G6.2 – Who may claim compensation or Extra Cover

At any time, only one person has the right to claim compensation or Extra Cover. The person who holds this sole right depends on the delivery status of the article.

<u>Claim Type</u>	<u>Sole Right to Claim held by</u>
Loss	Sender
Damage	Addressee

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Waiver of right to claim

The person with the sole right to claim compensation or Extra Cover may waive that right in favour of another person. The claimant must send the written waiver to the manager of the office handling the claim.

The sole right to claim compensation rests with the sender in the first instance because they can provide all of the details required to assess a claim, including a description of the contents and proof of value; a description of the packaging; the postal service used along with the date and place of posting; and the official postage receipt. However, as indicated above, the sender may waive the right to claim in favour of another person.

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Question No: 10

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Parcel Delays over Christmas

Senator Birmingham asked:

- a. What was the cause of parcel delays experienced over the Christmas period?
- b. Have these delays now been resolved?
- c. What recourse is there for people whose parcels were time sensitive and did not arrive on time?

Answer:

- a. The domestic parcel network experienced significant growth during December 2011 with a 17% increase in processed volume and a 55% increase in the volume of international inbound small parcels entering New South Wales compared to December in the previous year.

While parcels were being processed in record times across all parcel facilities in the weeks leading up to Christmas, the higher than anticipated volumes had a significant impact on overall processing, transport and delivery capability.

- b. Australia Post is currently reviewing last year's Peak Period performance and will take appropriate action to address the problems that arose. Performance standards for January and February showed significant improvement.
- c. Where a customer sent an Express Post Parcel that was both correctly addressed and lodged, but not delivered in accordance with the next-business-day delivery guarantee, Australia Post will refund the postage in full on presentation of a validated customer receipt.

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Question No: 11

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Parcel Revenue

Senator Birmingham asked:

- a. What was the outcome of the February 2012 Postal Operations Council meeting where Australia Post was reportedly seeking a terminal dues rate increase notification?
- b. Has Australia Post determined the format and weight characteristics of parcels that are presently profitable and loss making?

Answer:

- a. Australia Post put forward a justification that it believed met the technical requirements of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) regulations. The UPU disagreed with the assessment and did not support the proposal. It was subsequently put to a vote of the Postal Operations Council members with the following results – 20 Against, 10 For and 4 Abstentions.

At the same meeting, a new model for determining terminal dues rates was considered. The new model is scheduled to take effect from 1 January 2014 and, if it proceeds in its current form, will significantly improve the terminal dues paid to Australia Post.

In the mean time, Australia Post is continuing negotiations with several countries to establish more equitable bi-lateral agreements.

- b. Parcels over 2kgs are profitable under current UPU Inward Land Rate Remuneration.

The profitability of parcels less than 2kg varies according to weight, as the remuneration is provided under the UPU Terminal Dues calculation. Current modelling suggests parcels become marginally profitable beyond 1.2kg in weight.

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Question No: 12

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: JP Services

Senator Birmingham asked:

Franklin Street AU Post charging \$3.85/page to witness stat decs. Is this standard practice? How was rate determined?

Answer:

Australia Post offers two types of witnessing services – witnessing a signature on a document and certifying that a photocopy is a true copy of an original document.

A fee of \$3.95 is charged for each signature that is witnessed or document that is certified as being a true copy of the original. The price for this service was determined on the average length of time a staff member takes to effectively sight and certify each document and/or signature.

Australia Post does not charge for this service if the post office staff member conducting the transaction is a Justice of the Peace or for customers who present a valid government-issued concession card.

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Question No: 13

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Australia Post – Chapple Street, Gladstone

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. Why did Australia Post close the over counter service for the provision of stationery, stamps, envelopes and bill payments at the post office in Chapple Street, Gladstone?
2. Did Australia Post, when making this decision, take into consideration the rapid future population growth of the Gladstone region?
3. Have there been any offers to purchase the franchise of the Chapple Street post office? And if so, why didn't Australia Post allow the sale?

Answer:

1. The Gladstone Business Centre was established specifically to provide a range of services to business customers. Due to low numbers of business customers transacting at this location, the facility was providing a range of services directly to consumers that could be more effectively serviced from the four nearby retail outlets. Against this background, the decision was made to cease counter services at the Gladstone Business Centre Street on 27 January 2012.

Customers can access the full range of postal services at the following four nearby retail outlets, all of which are within five kilometres of Chapple Street:

Gladstone PO (1.7km)

Gladstone South LPO (3.1km)

Kin Cora LPO – (3.2km)

Clinton CPA – (4.1km)

Because of the closure of the Gladstone Business Centre, the above retail outlets have benefited from an increase in customer numbers, thereby enabling small business operators to ensure the ongoing sustainability of their businesses.

2. In making the decision to close the Gladstone Business Centre, Australia Post considered Gladstone's thriving industrial community and population growth. However, analysis indicated that neither of these factors contributed to measurable revenue growth for the Gladstone Business Centre.

Australia Post has maintained its presence in Chapple Street, with the facility now operating as a Delivery Centre that will support the efficient handling of the growing volumes of parcels for customers in the Gladstone area.

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The Delivery Centre has also taken over the management of the pickup and delivery services that were previously provided by the Business Centre to the Gladstone Regional Council and other local business customers, and has continued to provide a delivery service to customers for post office box mail and carded parcels.

3. Australia Post has not received any offers/approaches to take over the Gladstone Business Centre as a franchise.

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Question No: 14

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Contractors

Senator Humphries asked:

- a. How many contractors are currently employed in the department/agency?
- b. How many contractors have been under contract for a period of more than 2 years?
- c. How many contractors have been under contract for a period of more than 5 years?
- d. How many contractors have been under contract for a period of more than 10 years?
- e. Does the department/agency make a habit of employing contractors to fill positions on a permanent basis?

Answer:

- a-e) Australia Post does not normally hire contractors to fill positions on a permanent basis. Due to the flexible nature of contractors at any point in time there may be around 600 contractors employed. Over 70% of them would have tenure less than 2 years, 1% more than five years and none more than 10 years.

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Question No: 15

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Efficiency Dividend

Senator: Humphries asked:

- a. What is the effect of the efficiency dividend increase from 1.5 percent to 4 percent on the department/agency's budget bottom line during financial years 2012/13, 13/14, 14/15?
- b. What percentage of the department/agency's budget is designated to staffing?
- c. What is the size of the department/agency's staffing establishment? Include figures for FTE, PT, casual, contractors, and consultants.
- d. What specific strategies will the department/agency adopt to ensure continued operation within budget?
- e. Will or has consideration been made to reducing staffing compliment including contractors, and consultants?

Answer:

- a – e. As a Government Business Enterprise, Australia Post is not subject to the government's efficiency dividend or similar budget/policy measures.

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Question No: 16

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Complaints

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What is the process undertaken when a complaint is made to the 13 7678 number? How is the complaint investigated?
- b. How many complaints have been lodged about the postal service provided to residents and businesses on Libermann Cl, Adelaide, 5000 over the past three years and how have they been resolved?

Answer:

- a. In the case of failure to follow correct parcel delivery procedures (as outlined in Q9), the complaint investigation process is as follows:
 - Customer calls Customer Contact Centre (CCC) and lodges a complaint.
 - CCC staff member enters details into a computerised complaint handling system and asks the customer if they want to be advised of the outcome.
 - If the customer *does not* want to be advised of the outcome (i.e. many only want to report a problem), the CCC staff member refers the matter to the responsible delivery facility for follow-up with the delivery officer/contractor concerned and any necessary remedial action.
 - If the customer *does* want to be advised of the outcome, the CCC staff member follows the same procedure outlined above and, in addition, requests a formal report back to the CCC.
 - The CCC staff member calls the customer to apologise for the problem and advise the outcome of the investigation, including the remedial action taken to prevent a recurrence of the problem.
 - If the CCC staff member cannot contact the customer by telephone or the customer has requested a written reply, the CCC staff member will reply in writing.

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b. The number of complaints lodged about mail deliveries to Liberman Close, Adelaide, over the past three years was as follows:

- 2009/10 - 2
- 2010/11 - 4
- 2011/12 (YTD) - 4

The complaints were lodged by several residents of Liberman Close, Adelaide. In each case, the complaints were handled/resolved by CCC staff in accordance with the above procedures.

A number of companies provide mail deliveries to Adelaide City addresses, including Australia Post, Messenger Post, Australia air Express and Star Track Express. Australia Post has strict quality control measures in place to ensure parcels are delivered in accordance with procedures and has brought Senator Fisher's concerns to the attention of these joint venture companies to ensure their staff are following correct delivery procedures.

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Question No: 17

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Corporate Cars – Head Office

Senator Fisher asked:

How many cars are owned by Australia Post for use by head office staff?

- a. How far did each travel in 2010-11?
- b. What was the cost of each car for 2010-11?

Answer:

Australia Post is no longer structured into Headquarters Office and State administrations. The corporation's structure comprises four Strategic Business Units (SBUs) and four Functional Business Units (FBUs), with staff from the SBUs and FBUs working at various locations around Australia. The details sought about corporate cars used by SBU and FBU staff located at 111 Bourke Street, Melbourne, are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 18

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Taxi Costs – Head Office

Senator Fisher asked:

How much did Australia Post spend on taxis in 2010-11 for head office based staff?

Answer:

Australia Post is no longer structured into Headquarters Office and State administrations. The corporation's structure comprises four Strategic Business Units (SBUs) and four Functional Business Units (FBUs), with staff from the SBUs and FBUs working at various locations around Australia. The details sought about taxi costs incurred by SBU and FBU staff located at 111 Bourke Street, Melbourne, are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 19

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Hospitality – Head Office

Senator Fisher asked:

What was the Agency's hospitality spending for the year 2010-11 for the head office in Melbourne?

Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.

Answer:

Australia Post is no longer structured into Headquarters Office and State administrations. The corporation's structure comprises four Strategic Business Units (SBUs) and four Functional Business Units (FBUs), with staff from the SBUs and FBUs working at various locations around Australia. The details sought about hospitality activities undertaken by SBU and FBU staff located at 111 Bourke Street, Melbourne, are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 20

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Pay TV – Head Office

Senator Fisher asked:

Does the agency subscribe to pay TV (for example Foxtel) for its head office based staff?

- a. If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what channels.
- b. What was the cost for 2010-11?
- c. What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?

Answer:

Australia Post is no longer structured into Headquarters Office and State administrations. The corporation's structure comprises four Strategic Business Units (SBUs) and four Functional Business Units (FBUs), with staff from the SBUs and FBUs working at various locations around Australia. The details sought about pay TV subscriptions for SBU and FBU staff located at 111 Bourke Street, Melbourne, are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 21

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Education Expenses – Head Office

Senator Fisher asked:

For the year 2010-11, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for head office based staff. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant.

Answer:

Australia Post is no longer structured into Headquarters Office and State administrations. The corporation's structure comprises four Strategic Business Units (SBUs) and four Functional Business Units (FBUs), with staff from the SBUs and FBUs working at various locations around Australia. The details sought about education expenses for SBU and FBU staff located at 111 Bourke Street, Melbourne, are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 22

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Executive Coaching – Head Office

Senator Fisher asked:

In relation to the purchase of executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased for head office staff, please provide the following information for the year 2010-11:

1. 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
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
- e) The total amount spent on the service
- f) A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)

Where a service was provided at any location other than the agency's own premises, please provide:

- i. The location used
- ii. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
- iii. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part

Answer:

Australia Post is no longer structured into Headquarters Office and State administrations. The corporation's structure comprises four Strategic Business Units (SBUs) and four Functional Business Units (FBUs), with staff from the SBUs and FBUs working at various locations around Australia. The details sought about executive coaching for SBU and FBU staff located at 111 Bourke Street, Melbourne, are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 23

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many ongoing staff recruited this financial year to date? What classification are these staff?
- b. How many non-ongoing positions exist or have been created this financial year to date? What classification are these staff?
- c. This financial year to date, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

Answer:

- a. 1,399 permanent staff have been recruited FYTD, with the following classifications:

Administrative, Contract and IT (all levels)	-	252
Customer Contact Centre (all levels)	-	173
Postal Services (including Delivery Managers, Postal Delivery Officers, Postal/Parcel Services Officers, Drivers, Sorters, Transport, Technical Services and Trainees etc)	-	974

TOTAL	-	1,399
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- b. 216 fixed-term positions have been created FYTD, with similar classifications to those listed above.
- c. 176 staff have been employed on contract and their average length of employment is 4.7 months.

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Question No: 24

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many ongoing staff left in the year 2010-11? What classification were these staff?
- b. How many non-ongoing staff left in the year 2010-11? What classification were these staff?

Answer:

- a. 3,750 permanent staff exited in 2010/11, with the following classifications:

Administrative, Contract, Lawyer, Engineer, IT (all levels)	-	755
Customer Contact Centre (all levels)	-	208
Postal Services (including Delivery Managers, Postal Delivery Officers, Postal/Parcel Services Officers, Drivers, Sorters, Transport, Technical Services and Trainees etc)	-	2787

TOTAL	-	3750
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- b. 544 fixed-term staff exited in 2010/11, with similar classifications to those listed above.

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Question No: 25

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Fisher asked:

Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details i.e. reduction target, how this will be achieved, services/programs to be cut etc.

If there are plans for staff reductions, please give the reason why these are happening.

Answer:

There are no plans to reduce staff numbers. Staff numbers will continue to reflect the change and growth areas of the business. The Future Ready Skills Program investment of \$20m over three years will support training and skills development of staff that may be in roles that are not needed in the long-term and also support them if they do need to leave the business.

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Question No: 26

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Efficiency Dividend

Senator Fisher asked:

How will the efficiency dividend applied in the 2011-12 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook be implemented in your agency/department?

What percentage of your budget must be cut?

Will any staff position be cut to meet the efficiency dividend? If yes, provide details of where the positions are located, the classification, whether the position is ongoing or not.

Please list where and what spending has been reduced to meet the efficiency dividend.

Answer:

See answer to QoN No. 15.

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Question No: 27

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Fisher asked:

Please list the SES positions you have in your department/agency in the years 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and financial year to date. Identify the different levels and how many are permanent positions.

Answer:

Australia Post does not use the SES classification system.

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Question No: 28

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staffing

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many graduates have been engaged this year? Where have they been placed in the department/agency? Were these empty positions or are they new positions?
- b. List what training will be provided, the name of the provider and the cost.

Answer:

- a. 10 graduates have been engaged FYTD and placed in the following areas - Finance (1), Human Resources (2), IT (1), Digital Services (1), Retail (1), Sales (3) and Mail Services (1). The ten positions were vacant.
- b. Training will cover a range of skills (including communications, leadership, project management, goal setting etc), will be provided by four different suppliers (Bramwell Solutions, Development Beyond Learning, Burst Development and Fusion) and the costs are still being negotiated.

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Question No: 29

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Advertising

Senator Fisher asked:

For each of those years, list whether the advertising is campaign or non-campaign and details of each advertising, including the program the advertising was for, the total spend and the business that provided the advertising services.

Did the Department of Finance and Deregulation provide any advice about the advertising? Provide details of each advertising item.

Did the Advertising comply with the Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by Australian Government Departments and Agencies? Provide the details for each advertising item.

Provide details for any other communications program, including details of the program, the total spend and the business that provided the communication services.

What advertising – Campaign and Non-Campaign – and other communications programs is the Department/Agency undertaking, or are planning to undertake?

Answer:

Australia Post has not undertaken and is not planning to undertake any ‘Advertising or Communications Programs’ as defined in QoN No. 59 – Budget Estimates Hearings May 2010.

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Question No: 30

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Hospitality and Entertainment

Senator Fisher asked:

- a) What is the Department/Agency's hospitality spend for this financial year to date? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.
- b) For each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary office, please detail total hospitality spend for this financial year to date. Detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event.
- c) What is the Department's entertainment spend for this financial year to date? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.
- d) For each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary office, please detail total entertainment spend for this financial year to date. Detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event.
- e) What hospitality spend is the Department/Agency's planning on spending? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.
- f) For each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary office, what hospitality spend is currently being planned for? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event.
- g) What entertainment spend is the Department/Agency's planning on spending? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.
- h) For each Minister and Parliamentary Secretary office, what entertainment spend is currently being planned for? Detail date, location, purpose and cost of each event.

Answer:

a,c,

e & g) As a large commercially focussed Government Business Enterprise operating in a number of highly competitive markets, Australia Post engages in a broad range of business-related hospitality and entertainment activities across the corporation on an ongoing basis. These activities are aimed at strengthening existing customer relationships and developing potential ones. The specific details sought in respect of each business-related hospitality activity across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

b,d,

f & h) These questions are not relevant to Australia Post.

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Question No: 31

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: in Writing

Topic: Grants

Senator Fisher asked:

Has the Department/Agency complied with interim requirements relating to the publication of discretionary grants?

Answer:

As a Government Business Enterprise, Australia Post is not subject to the government's policy requirements relating to discretionary grants.

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Question No: 32

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Freedom of Information

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Has the Department/agency received any advice on how to respond to FOI requests?
- b. What was the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for 2009-10 and 2010-11?
- c. What is the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for this financial year to date?
- d. How many FOI requests did the Department receive for the financial year 2009-10 and 2010-11? For each financial year, how many requests were denied and how many were granted? Did the department fail to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests? If so, how many? Do any of these requests remain outstanding?
- e. How many FOI requests has the Department received for this financial year to date? How many requests have been denied and how many have been granted? Has the department failed to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests? If so, how many? Do any of these requests remain outstanding?
- f. How many conclusive certificates have been issued in relation to FOI requests for this financial year to date?

Answer:

- a. At various times, Australia Post has sought expert external advice on technical aspects of the Freedom of Information Act, however, not in the last 12 months.
- b. The total cost was \$15,535 and \$30,532 for 2009/10 and 2010/11 respectively, as indicated in the FOI Annual Reports.
- c. The total cost in the FYTD is approximately \$40,300.
- d. Details about the number of FOI requests received, granted and denied during 2009/10 and 2010/11 are included in Australia Post's Annual Reports: Australia Post failed to meet the required processing times on five occasions in 2009/10 and on one occasion in 2010/11.
- e. In the FYTD, Australia Post has received 62 applications, granted access in full to 42 applications, and access in part to 11 applications. Access was refused to 5 applications and 1 application was withdrawn. Six applications are still being processed. Australia Post has failed to meet the required processing times on four occasions.
- f. None.

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Question No: 33

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Consultancies

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many consultancies were undertaken in 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10?
- b. How many consultancies have been undertaken this financial year to date? Identify the name of the consultant, the subject matter of the consultancy, the duration and cost of the arrangement, and the method of procurement (i.e. open tender, direct source, etc). Also, include total value for all consultancies.
- c. How many consultancies are planned for this calendar year? Have these been published in your Annual Procurement Plan (APP) on the AusTender website and if not why not? In each case, please identify the subject matter, duration, cost and method of procurement as above, and the name of the consultant if known.

Answer:

- a-c) The details sought about consultancies during the three years in question across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the details requested. As a Government Business Enterprise, Australia Post is not required to produce or publish an Annual Procurement Plan on the AusTender website.

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Question No: 34

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Monitoring

Senator Fisher asked:

What was the total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera, provided to the department/agency for 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11

Answer:

The total cost of media monitoring services for the four financial years in question was as follows:

2007-08:	\$215,619
2008-09:	\$210,331
2009-10:	\$264,766
2010-11:	\$264,064

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Question No: 35

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Monitoring

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What was the total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera, provided to the department/agency for this financial year to date?
- b. Which agency or agencies provided these services?
- c. What is the estimated budget to provide this same services for the year 2011-12?
- d. What has been spent providing these services this financial year to date?

Answer:

- a&d) The total cost of media monitoring services for this financial year to date (Feb 2012) was \$150,000.
- b. Media Monitors provides this service.
- c. The estimated budget for 2011-12 is \$253,000.

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Question No: 36

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Social Media

Senator Fisher asked:

Has there been any changes to department and agency social media or protocols about staff access and usage of You tube; online social media, such as Face book, My Space and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since publication of the Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online? If yes, please explain and provide copies of any advice that has been issue. If no, please explain why not.

Answer:

No, there has been no change to staff access and usage of social media sites.

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Question No: 37

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Contractors

Senator Fisher asked:

For this financial year to date:

1. Has the department/agency ever employed Hawker Britton in any capacity or is it considering employing Hawker Britton? If yes, provide details.
2. Has the department/agency ever employed Shannon's Way in any capacity or is it considering employing Shannon's Way? If yes, provide details.
3. Has the department/agency ever employed John Utting & UMR Research Group in any capacity or is it considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group? If yes, provide details.
4. Has the department/agency ever employed McCann-Erickson in any capacity or is it considering employing McCann-Erickson? If yes, provide details.
5. Has the department/agency ever employed Cutting Edge in any capacity or is it considering employing Cutting Edge? If yes, provide details.
6. Has the department/agency ever employed Ikon Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing Ikon Communications? If yes, provide details.
7. Has the department/agency ever employed CMAX Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing CMAX Communications? If yes, provide details.
8. Has the department/agency ever employed Boston Consulting Group in any capacity or is it considering employing Boston Consulting Group? If yes, provide details.
9. Has the department/agency ever employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity or is it considering employing McKinsey & Company? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

Since 1 July 2011, Australia Post has engaged McCann Erickson to perform media buying on behalf of Australia Post and engaged Boston Consulting Group to provide consultancy advice on eServices. .

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Question No: 38

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Payment of Accounts

Senator Fisher asked:

For this financial year to date, has the department/agency paid its accounts to contractors/consultants etc in accordance with Government policy in terms of time for payment (i.e. within 30 days)? If not, why not, and what has been the timeframe for payment of accounts? Please provide a breakdown, average statistics etc as appropriate to give insight into how this issue is being approached)

- a. For accounts not paid within 30 days, is interest being paid on overdue amounts and if so how much has been paid by the portfolio/department agency for the current financial year and the previous financial year?
- b. Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

Answer:

a&b. As a Government Business Enterprise, Australia Post is not subject to the Government's policy requirements on the payment of contractor/consultant accounts.

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Question No: 39

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Government Stationery Requirements

Senator Fisher asked:

How much was spent by each department and agency on the government (Ministers/Parliamentary Secretaries) stationery requirements in your portfolio (i.e. paper, envelopes, with compliments slips) this financial year to date?

Answer:

As a Government Business Enterprise, Australia Post does not spend any money on the government's stationery requirements.

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Question No: 40

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: in Writing

Topic: Media Subscriptions

Senator Fisher asked:

Does your department or agencies within your portfolio subscribe to pay TV (for example Foxtel)?

- a. If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what channels.
- b. What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?
- c. What is the cost for this financial year to date?

Does your department or agencies within your portfolio subscribe to newspapers?

- a. If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what newspapers.
- b. What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?
- c. What is the cost for this financial year to date?

Does your department or agencies within your portfolio subscribe to magazines?

- a. If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what magazines.
- b. What is the estimated cost for 2011-12?
- c.

What is the cost for this financial year to date?

Answer:

The details sought about media subscriptions across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 41

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Travel Costs

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel (itemised separately) undertaken by employees of each department and agency within each portfolio. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type – i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses.
- b. Are employees taking the most direct route when travelling? If not, please explain why.
- c. Are lounge memberships provided to any employees? If yes, what lounge memberships, to how many employees and their classification, the reason for the provision of lounge membership and the cost per employee.
- d. When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as their Executive Assistant) travel with them? If yes, provide details of why such a staff member is needed and the costs of the support staff travel.

Answer:

- a-d. The specific details sought in respect of business-related travel costs across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

Australia Post spent a total of \$3,788,591 on travel for the FYTD, for business-related purposes. The details sought about travel costs, routes etc. across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 42

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services for this financial year to date within the department/agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- b. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- c. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- d. What sum did each portfolio department and agency spend on legal services this financial year to date from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

Answer:

- a. Approx. \$1,672,932 (staff related costs)
- b. Approx. \$4,679
- c. Approx. \$3,109,194
- d. Approx. \$692,110.

Details about individual services, who provides them and costs are commercial-in-confidence.

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Question No: 43

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Education Expenses

Senator Fisher asked:

For this financial year to date, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio department and agency. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant. Also, include the reason for the study.

Answer:

The details sought about education expenses across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 44

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Executive Coaching and Leadership Training

Senator Fisher asked:

In relation to executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by each department/agency, please provide the following information for this financial year to date:

1. 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
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
- e) The total amount spent on the service
- f) A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)

Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises please provide:

- i. The location used
- ii. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
- iii. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part

Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Answer:

The details sought about executive coaching and leadership training across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 45

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Media Training

Senator Fisher asked:

In relation to media training services purchased by each department/agency, please provide the following information for this financial year to date:

1. 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
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
- e) The total amount spent on the service
- f) A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)

Where a service was provided at any location other than the department or agency's own premises please provide:

- i. The location used
- ii. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
- iii. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part

Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Answer:

- 1-4. The total cost of media training for this FYTD (Feb 2012) was \$5,500. Two employees - Media Manager and Media Advisor – took part in a half day (4 hour) session each. The services were provided by Katrina Byers Consulting. The sessions were 1:1 and held off-site. The total location fee was \$500 (i.e. \$250 per session).

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Question No: 46

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Paid Parental Leave

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Please list how many staff in each portfolio department and agency are eligible to receive payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme?
- b. For this financial year to date list which department/agency is providing its employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme?
- c. Please list how many staff are in receipt of these payments.

Answer:

- a. All employees with more than 12 months service who earn less than \$150,000 per annum and are the primary care giver of a child are eligible to receive payment under the government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme. As eligibility is based on primary caring responsibility, the number of eligible staff cannot be identified.
- b&c) Australia Post put the mechanisms in place to begin providing employees with payments under the scheme from 1 July 2011. Currently, 87 employees are in receipt of these payments.

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Question No: 47

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Corporate Cars

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many cars are owned by each department and agency in your portfolio?
- b. Where is the car/s located?
- c. What is the car/s used for?
- d. What is the cost of each car for this financial year to date?
- e. How far did each car travel this financial year to date?

Answer:

a&c) Australia Post owns 490 cars, which are used for a variety for business-related purposes.

b,d&e) The details sought about corporate cars across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 48

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Taxi Costs

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How much did each department/agency spend on taxis in 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11? Provide a breakdown of each business group in each department/agency.
- b. How much did each department/agency spend on taxis this financial year to date? Provide a breakdown of each business group in each department/agency.

Answer:

- a&b) Australia Post spent a total of \$1,519,990 on taxis in 2010/11 and \$1,108,705 FYTD. The details sought about taxi costs in 2007/08 and 2008/09 across the entire corporation are not captured on any central database. As such, Australia Post is not in a position to provide the information requested.

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Question No: 49

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Credit Cards

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many staff in each department and agency have a corporate credit card? What is their classification?
- b. What action is taken if the corporate credit card is misused?
- c. How is corporate credit card use monitored?
- d. What happens if misuse of a corporate credit card is discovered?
- e. Have any instances of corporate credit card misuse have been discovered? List staff classification and what the misuse was, and the action taken.
- f. What action is taken to prevent corporate credit card misuse?

Answer:

- a. 2671 = Executive Managers (1234) and Staff (1437).
- b,d&f. Australia Post's well publicised "Our Ethics" policy details the standards of behaviour expected of everyone who works for or represents the corporation and the disciplinary measures that will be taken in the event of a breach of the standards. This includes referral of suspected or alleged criminal behaviour to its Corporate Security Group (CSG). Where evidence supports the allegation, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authorities or Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.
- c. Use is monitored through authorisation of statements, monthly reporting and periodical audits.
- e. No cases of alleged or proven criminal behaviour involving corporate credit cards have been reported to Australia Post's CSG in the year to date.

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Additional Estimates Hearings February 2012
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 50

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Provision of Equipment

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Does the department/agency provide their Ministers and/or Parliamentary Secretaries and/or their offices with any electronic equipment? If yes, provide details of what is provided, the cost and to whom it is provided.
- b. What equipment is provided to department/agency staff? Please list what the equipment is, the cost, the classification of the staff receiving the equipment and the reason why.

Answer:

- a&b As a Government Business Enterprise, Australia Post does not provide any Ministers/Parliamentary Secretaries and/or their offices with any electronic equipment.