

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 176  
**Hearing:** Additional Estimates  
**Outcome:** Corporate  
**Programme:** Policy and Communications Division  
**Topic:** Portfolio wide - Freedom of Information resources  
**Hansard Page:** N/A  
**Question Date:** 7 March 2014  
**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Ludwig asked:**

1. What resources does the department commit to its Freedom of Information team?
2. List the staffing resources by APS level assigned solely to Freedom of Information requests
3. List the staffing resources by APS level assigned indirectly to Freedom of Information requests
4. Does the department ever second additional resources to processing Freedom of Information requests?
  - a) If so, please detail those resources by APS level

**Answer:**

**Department of the Environment**

1. – 3. Please refer to the Department's response to the Supplementary Budget Estimates question 196 in November 2013. This response is unchanged.
4. Please refer to the Department's response to the Supplementary Budget Estimates question 197 in November 2013. This response is unchanged.

**Bureau of Meteorology**

1. Refer to answers 2 and 3.
2. Assigned solely to Freedom of Information requests:
  - EL1 – FOI Coordinator.
3. Assigned indirectly to Freedom of Information requests:
  - Staff at a range of different APS levels (including SES officers) may be required on a case-by-case basis to assist different aspects of handling FOI requests, including document searches, internal consultation and decision-making.
4. No.

**Clean Energy Regulator**

1. The Freedom of Information (FOI) function is coordinated by the Legal Services Section within the Clean Energy Regulator. There is no distinct funding for the function.
2. No officers are assigned solely to FOI requests.
3. The following staffing resources are assigned indirectly to FOI requests:
  - Senior Executive Service Band 1 – as and when required;
  - Senior Legal Officer – currently, approximately 40 per cent of workload but depends on nature and volume of requests on hand;
  - Senior Legal Officer – currently, approximately 30 per cent of workload but depends on nature and volume on requests on hand;

- Legal Officer – as and when required; and
- Administrative Assistant – as and when required.

The search and retrieval of relevant files and documents may be done by officers in other areas of the Clean Energy Regulator, depending on the nature of the requested documents. Relevant officers are mainly employed at the APS 4-6 levels, with direction and assistance from an Executive Level 2 (and/or Senior Executive Service Band 1 when required).

4. No secondment of additional resources has occurred to date.

#### **Climate Change Authority (the Authority)**

1. There is one Executive Level 1 officer assigned to process Freedom of Information requests as part of the Authority's corporate services function.
2. There are no staff members assigned solely to processing Freedom of Information requests.
3. There are no staff members assigned indirectly to Freedom of Information requests.
4. The Authority never seconds additional resources to process Freedom of Information requests.
  - a) Not applicable.

#### **Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority**

1. Freedom of Information requests are managed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Legal Services section.
2. There are no staff assigned solely for the purpose of Freedom of Information requests.
3. Freedom of Information requests are managed in the Legal Services section by the staff of the Legal Services section. The Legal Services section comprises:
  - 1 x EL2
  - 2 x EL1
  - 1 x APS6
  - 1 x APS3
4. Other staff within Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority undertake tasks to assist with the processing of Freedom of Information requests and this varies depending on the nature of the Freedom of Information request. Identifying all the individual staff involved has not been attempted as the task is complex and would involve a significant diversion of resources.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority uses the resources within the agency available at the time to process a Freedom of Information request. This may involve taking staff off line to search and retrieve documents relevant to the Freedom of Information request.

#### **Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the Authority)**

1. The Authority has one APS 6 position partly committed to FOI requests, with legal positions and a Senior Executive Service 2 position committed as required.
2. The Authority has no positions assigned solely to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
3. One APS 6 position member is partly assigned to FOI requests, with legal positions and a Senior Executive Service 2 position dedicated as required.
4. No.

**National Water Commission (the Commission)**

1. – 3. The Commission does not have a dedicated FOI team. As FOI requests are received staff at a range of different APS levels are assigned on a case-by-case basis to assist with researching and responding to the request.
4. The Commission has not in the past seconded additional resources to process FOI requests.

**Sydney Harbour Federation Trust**

1. – 4. There has been no change to the answer provided to this question through Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013 QON 196 and 197.