

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, May 2011

Answers to questions on notice

Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio

Outcome:	1	Question No:	154
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Small-scale technology certificates		
Hansard Page EC:	EC 73-74		

Senator Birmingham asked:

Mr Livingston: There are some firms that have bought them at below market and lodged them in the clearing house.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: And there is nothing that prevents firms from doing that?

Mr Livingston: No.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Do have an idea of to what extent this has occurred?

Mr Livingston: We know it has occurred—

Mr Rathore: We can only give you a rough estimate. About 10 to 12 companies are trying to resell. But we are happy to take that on notice and give you some exact numbers.

...

Senator BIRMINGHAM: You are aware of 10 to 12 companies. Do you have an estimate as to how many certificates they are currently trading in?

Mr Rathore: We do not have those numbers in front of us. We are happy to take it on notice.

Answer:

23 sell orders were placed in the Clearing House by five different liable entities since 1 January 2011 which totalled 353,421 Small-scale Technology Certificates (STCs). All but two sell orders were withdrawn by the respective companies prior to the 1st Quarter surrender deadline. The two remaining sell orders (same liable party) were subsequently transacted for a total of 29,953 STCs.

Currently one liable entity has offered STCs for sale in the Clearing House (the same entity that completed the sales above). They have a total of approximately 78,000 STCs offered for sale spread over 10 separate orders. Whether or not these STCs remain in the Clearing House until they are sold is not guaranteed as this entity has withdrawn sell orders in the past.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	155
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Birmingham		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Birmingham asked:

What is the total expenditure on conferences both:

- a. in-house, that is, held within ORER; and
- b. external, held by ORER on a month-by-month basis since July 2010?

For conferences fully funded by ORER and costing in excess of \$30,000:

- i. where was the venue;
- ii. what was the reason for each conference;
- iii. how many participants registered;
- iv. were consultancy fees paid for the organisation of each conference;
- v. to whom were the consultancy fees paid; and
- vi. what was the cost of each consultancy.

For conferences part-sponsored or part-funded by ORER and costing the Commonwealth in excess of \$30,000:

1. what was the cost to ORER;
2. what was the proportion of Commonwealth funding as against the total cost of the conference;
3. what was the rationale for the sponsorship or part-funding; (d) what was the venue;
4. how many participants registered;
5. did the Commonwealth contribute to any consultant organising the conference; if so, who was the consultant; and
6. how much was the Commonwealth's contribution?

Answer:

- a. The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) did not hold any in-house conferences for the period.

- b. The ORER held five external conferences (workshops):

Conferences	Month	Amount (GST inclusive)
Appropriate Technology Retailers Association of Australia	August 2010	\$15,016
Agents & Installer workshops	August 2010	\$46,058
Ecogen	September 2010	\$13,376
Liabile Parties	September 2010	\$10,304
Clean Energy Week	May 2011	\$17,915
Total		\$102,669

For conferences fully funded by the ORER and costing in excess of \$30,000:

- i. Agents and Installer workshops (August 2010) \$46,058 (GST inclusive):

Adelaide – The Sebel Playford
Brisbane – The Novotel
Melbourne – The Novotel on Collins
Perth – Novotel Langely
Sydney – Intercontinental

- ii. Legislative changes in June 2010 required the ORER to communicate these changes to stakeholders prior to January 2011.

- iii. Adelaide – 47
Brisbane – 102
Melbourne – 137
Perth – 99
Sydney – 67

- iv. There were no consultancy fees paid for the conferences.

- v. Not applicable.

- vi. Not applicable.

There were no conferences part-sponsored or part-funded by the ORER and costing Commonwealth in excess of \$30,000.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	156
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Fees and charges		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Birmingham asked:

What fees or charges does the ORER collect? By each fee or charge, please detail who pays it and how these fees or charges have changed or might change between 2010-11 and 2011-12?

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator currently collects fees administered on behalf of the Commonwealth below:

- Certificate creation fee – 8 cents.
- Certificate surrender fee – 8 cents.
- Power Station accreditation fee (variable price which is depended on technology and size of Power Station).
- Registered person fee – \$20.
- Agent fee – \$230.

Fees are paid by applicants, certificate creators and liable parties.

In 2011-12, there will be changes to the certificate creation fee for small generation units which will increase from 8 cents to 47 cents.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	157
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Compliance		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Birmingham asked:

- a. How many Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) expressed both as a number and a percentage, and to what total value expressed both as a dollar amount and a percentage, have been invalidated in financial year 2010/11 to date?
- b. On what grounds were they invalidated?
- c. How many companies have been involved and what action has been taken against them?
- d. What regulatory or inspection measures have been taken by the ORER regarding invalid RECs?
- e. What data does the ORER have on any compliance problems it has uncovered or identified? What steps are being taken to ensure greater compliance?
- f. Has any rectification work been required to be undertaken?

Answer:

- a. 2,498,937 Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) were failed due to validation audit in financial year 2010-11 as at 13 June 2011. This equates to 4.35 per cent of all RECs created over the financial year 2010-11. The Renewable Energy Target is a market based scheme and therefore the price of RECs is set by supply and demand. As such there is no single REC price and hence an accurate value cannot be placed on these RECs.
- b. Before RECs become registered and a tradeable commodity in the internet based REC Registry, they must all go through an Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) validation process. Most of the 2,498,937 RECs that were failed due to validation audit were due to a range of administrative errors when creating the RECs. When RECs are failed due to validation audit this does not necessarily mean they are not eligible RECs. Rather, it most often means the applicant has made an error when creating the RECs and therefore the ORER fails the RECs so they can be recreated with the correct information. In most cases the RECs are recreated with the errors corrected and then passed by the ORER.

The main reasons RECs are invalidated are:

- At the request of the agent or home-owner, due to incorrect information input into the REC Registry.
 - Incomplete information entered into the REC Registry.
 - Incorrect eligibility paperwork lodged with the ORER.
 - Home-owner receiving pre-approval for the following Federal Government rebates for their solar panel installation. Under the Act they cannot receive solar credits if they have pre-approval for the following:
 - Solar Homes and Communities Plan.
 - Renewable Remote Power Generation.
 - National Solar Schools Program.
 - Photovoltaic Rebate Program.
 - Duplicate serial number/product number.
 - Duplicate address – more than one system is installed at a single address and insufficient details have been provided to distinguish one system from the others.
 - Incorrect out-of-pocket expense entered into the REC Registry.
 - Incorrect Clean Energy Council (CEC) accreditation number for the installer.
 - Non-approved CEC panel or inverter type.
 - Systems have not been completed installed and/or not installed according to CEC guidelines.
 - Over-creation of amount of RECs.
 - RECs created under the wrong fuel source.
 - RECs created under the wrong time-frame.
 - Electricity data adjustment. In this case meter data that was sent to ORER to support REC creations was adjusted which resulted in the under/over-creation of RECs.
- c. The 2,498,937 RECs that failed due to validation audit were created by 667 Registered Persons/companies. As stated above, in most cases these RECs were failed due to administrative errors and these RECs were recreated with those errors rectified.

Other actions taken against these companies include:

- additional validation requirements place on the those companies before creating RECs again;
 - additional validation checks once the RECs have been created; and
 - compliance visits to stakeholders creating RECs to review business processes and procedures.
- d. The ORER employs a range of responses that escalate according to the severity of the contravention or if non-compliant activities continue. Generally, education and/or warnings will be used in response to first and less serious contraventions. For serious or continuing contraventions, deterrent sanctions will be used that may include suspension of registration, suspension of accreditation, civil recovery and criminal prosecution.

The Renewable Energy Regulator (Regulator) has suspended agents until such time they were able to demonstrate to the Regulator satisfaction that their business practices were appropriate to prevent futuer improper creation of RECs.

Matters have been referred onto other appropriate authorities for further investigation and possible legal action.

As at 20 June 2011, the Regulator has accepted 12 enforceable undertakings.

- e. The ORER maintains case management data relating to matters in which compliance activities are undertaken. This data includes the nature of the allegation, the actions taken to investigate the allegation and the outcome of any investigation. In addition, the ORER is able to support its validation, inspection and compliance functions via information derived from the REC Registry.

The ORER's validation, inspection and compliance functions are all subject to continuous improvement. The ORER has invested significantly in staff, staff training and development and technology to support its validation, inspection and compliance activities. In addition, the ORER works with stakeholders to ensure they understand the eligibility requirements and the consequences of any non compliance. To this end ORER has an active communications program as well as maintains a program of outreach visits by members of the ORER's compliance and validations teams. Recently the ORER has begun a small generation unit inspection program which is expected to also support its validation and compliance functions.

- f. To 20 June 2011, the Regulator has accepted 12 enforceable undertakings. Most of these enforceable undertakings address matters of rectification. Details of the undertakings can be found on the ORER website at www.orer.gov.au.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	158
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Inspections		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Birmingham asked:

- a. Have there been inspections of solar installations to check that installations are safe, and have been installed properly so as to maximise the efficiency of the solar panels in generating electricity? If so, what have been the findings?
- b. The budget refers to an inspection scheme for solar panels (Budget paper 2, page 124). Has this started?
- c. The solar inspection scheme will be partially funded by a new increase in the fee for people who install solar panels (see Budget paper 2, page 124). The fee will increase more than five-fold, "from 8 cents to 47 cents". Is this per REC? Per watt?
- d. What would the fee be under the current 8 cent fee, for a 2kW solar system? And what would the fee be under the new 47 cent fee, for a 2kW system?
- e. Who will conduct these safety inspections? Has anyone been contracted to do this? What percentage of new installations will be inspected?

Answer:

- a. For the purpose of ensuring compliance of small generation unit installations with the requirements of the *Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000*, the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) commenced an inspection program in mid May 2011. Part 7 of the *Renewable Energy (Electricity) Regulations 2001* define the matters for inspection which include:
 - the unit is installed at the address specified in the application to create certificates and is able to produce and deliver electricity;
 - that all state or territory, and local government requirements have been satisfied for:
 - the siting of the unit;
 - if the unit is attached to a building or structure – attachment of the unit to the building or structure; and
 - if the unit is grid-connected – the grid connection of the unit;
 - the installation of the unit complies with the nominated Australian standards in force at the time the unit was installed.

The first tranche of inspections are currently being undertaken. When completed the results will be analysed by the ORER and a summary placed on the ORER website.

Electrical safety and compliance with building codes is the responsibility of the various state and territory regulatory bodies.

- b. Yes, the ORER commenced an inspection program in mid May 2011.
- c. Per certificate.
- d. The (Small-scale Technology Certificate (STC) creation) 'fee' for a 2 kilowatt system will depend on the number of certificates the installed system is entitled to receive. This in turn will depend on the location of the installed system. The Renewable Energy Regulator has determined four zones in Australia based on climate and solar radiation levels which are used by the ORER to determine an STC entitlement.
- e. The inspections will be conducted by persons appointed by the Renewable Energy Regulator under Regulation 33. The ORER has contracted three service delivery providers to undertake the inspections (Global Sustainable Energy Solutions, ECA Safety Connect Pty Ltd and Australian Solar Energy Society).

To determine the inspection sample size and composition, the ORER has sought advice from an independent statistical sampling consultant. In the first full year about 3,000 inspections conducted nationwide have been estimated to provide a statistically significant selection of the likely small generation units installed in that year. A random sample of this size will allow the ORER to estimate the rate of non-compliance in the population as well as to refine the sampling strategy for the future years.

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Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio

Outcome:	1	Question No:	159
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	STC Clearing House		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Birmingham asked:

- a. When will the STC Clearing House start working?
- b. When will installers and retailers be able to get a price of \$40 per small-scale technology certificate (STC)?
- c. Who will provide the \$40 price per STC, via the Clearing House, when the spot market is as low as around \$25?
- d. How often is the Clearing House actually cleared?
- e. Is the ORER aware of the reported practice of energy retailers buying STCs on the spot market for around \$25 and parking them in the STC Clearing House, in the expectation they will sell them on for around \$40 when the Clearing House is cleared in perhaps 12-18 months time? Is such practice allowed?
- f. Is such profiteering acceptable to the Government?

Answer:

- a. The Small-scale Technology Certificate (STC) Clearing House came on-line 5 January 2011.
- b. Sellers will get \$40 per STC when (i) they place their STCs in the Clearing House, (ii) their STCs reach the top of a 'first in first out queue', and (iii) a buyer enters a purchase request in the Clearing House.
- c. Liable parties without bilateral contracts for STCs sufficient to meet their liability needs and/or those who do not wish to risk purchasing STCs in the 'over the counter' or 'spot' market can be expected to purchase STCs from the Clearing House. Liable parties may also elect to use the Clearing House out of convenience despite a potential difference in price relative to the 'spot' market.
- d. How often the Clearing House will clear at any point in time is a function of (i) the number of STCs that have been lodged, (ii) the number that have been withdrawn prior to sale, and/or (iii) the number that have been sold.

- e. The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) has no responsibility to monitor the trading practices of the energy retailers. The Clearing House is a trading platform albeit one at a fixed price. Having met the ORER's proof of identity criteria no restriction is placed on listing or removing STCs in the Clearing House.
- f. The Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme provides the owners of STCs with the option of selling their STCs directly or through the Clearing House. A decision to sell an STC directly for a market based price or to list the STC in the Clearing House is a matter for the owner. No restriction is placed on the owner having made a decision one way or the other, to at a later time elect to take up the other option.

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Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio

Outcome: 1 **Question No:** 160
Program: ORER
Division/Agency: ORER
Topic: Effective rebate
Hansard Page EC: Written

Senator Birmingham asked:

- a. What would the RET-or SRES-funded rebate to householders be for a 2kW solar array under a Solar Credits multiplier of 5 with an STC spot price of \$26, if the retailer uses the spot market and not the clearing house?
- b. What would the RET- or SRES-funded rebates be in those circumstances with Solar Credits multipliers of 4 and 3 respectively?

Answer:

- a. The Small-scale Technology Certificate (STC) entitlement for a householder who installs a two kilowatt (kW) solar array under a Solar Credits multiplier of five will depend on the location of home. The Renewable Energy Regulator has determined four zones in Australia based on climate and solar radiation levels which are used by the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator to determine a householder's STC entitlement.

If the householder chooses to sell his/her STCs on the spot market for \$26.00 the following would apply with a multiplier of five:

kW capacity	Zone rating	Number of STCs (multiplier of 5x)	Amount for STCs at \$26
2	1	194	\$5,044
2	2	184	\$4,784
2	3	165	\$4,290
2	4	142	\$3,692

- b. If the householder chooses to sell his/her STCs on the spot market for \$26.00 the following would apply with multipliers of four and three respectively:

kW capacity	Zone rating	Number of STCs (multiplier of 4x)	Amount for STCs at \$26
2	1	158	\$4,108
2	2	149	\$3,874
2	3	134	\$3,484

2	4	115	\$2,990
kW capacity	Zone rating	Number of STCs (multiplier of 3x)	Amount for STCs at \$26
2	1	121	\$3,146
2	2	115	\$2,990
2	3	103	\$2,678
2	4	88	\$2,288

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	161
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Freedom of Information Requests		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has ORER received any advice on how to respond to FOI requests?

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) processes freedom of information (FOI) applications in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, FOI Regulations, and the FOI Guidelines available from the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). ORER representatives have undertaken a range of professional development and training on FOI, including attending the FOI Practitioner's Forum hosted by the Australian Government Solicitor and the Information Contact Officer Network meetings hosted by the OAIC.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	162
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Reviews		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many Reviews are currently being undertaken by ORER?
- b. When will each of these reviews be concluded?
- c. What reviews have been concluded FYTD?
- d. What further reviews are planned for 2010 - 11 FY?
- e. Which of these reviews has been provided to Government?
- f. When will the Government be responding to the respective reviews that have been completed?
- g. What is the estimated cost of each of these Reviews?

Answer:

No reviews were undertaken by the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) in the financial year to date. No further reviews are planned by the ORER for the 2010-11 financial year.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	163
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Consultancies		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Does ORER stand by its current tenders on the Austenders website?
- b. Have any changes or corrections been made for any tenders advertised on to Government Tenders website (www.tenders.gov.au) for tenders advertised this financial year? Explain.
- c. Are up to date with reporting requirements?

Answer:

- a. Yes.
- b. Yes, minor changes have been made to some tenders on the website for the purpose of correcting grammar errors.
- c. Yes.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	164
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Media subscriptions – Pay TV		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Does ORER subscribe to pay TV (for example Foxtel)? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what channels.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator does not subscribe to pay TV.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	165
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Media subscriptions – Newspapers		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Does ORER subscribe to newspapers? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what newspapers.

Answer:

The Convention Centre newsagency provides the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) with the following newspapers on a daily basis:

- the Australian; and
- the Australian Financial Review.

These newspapers keep the ORER staff abreast of current news issues that may impact on the Office's administration of the *Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000*.

The cost of the newspapers is \$1,551.44 year to date (20 June 2011).

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	166
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Media Subscriptions – Magazines		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Does ORER subscribe to magazines? If yes, please provide the reason why, the cost and what magazines.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator does not subscribe to magazines.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	167
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Social Media		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has there been any changes to ORER social media or protocols about staff access and usage of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since October 2010? If yes, please explain.

Answer:

No. In line with the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency's IT and Internet Usage Policy, the use of departmental supplied ICT equipment and facilities for personal reasons should be infrequent and brief. The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator has highlighted the IT and Internet Usage Policy to all staff, with specific reference to social networking sites such as Facebook, and asked staff to limit their use for personal reasons as outlined in the policy.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	168
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Contractors – Hawker Britton		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has ORER ever employed Hawker Britton in any capacity or is it considering employing Hawker Britton? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator has neither employed nor is considering employing Hawker Britton at this point in time.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	169
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Contractors – Shannon’s Way		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has ORER ever employed Shannon’s Way in any capacity or is it considering employing Shannon’s Way? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator has neither employed nor is considering employing Shannon’s Way at this point in time.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	170
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Contractors – John Utting & UMR Research Group		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has ORER ever employed John Utting & UMR Research Group in any capacity or is it considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator has neither employed nor is considering employing John Utting & UMR Research Group at this point in time.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	171
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Contractors – McCann-Erickson		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has ORER ever employed McCann-Erickson in any capacity or is it considering employing McCann-Erickson? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator has neither employed nor is considering employing McCann-Erickson at this point in time.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	172
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Contractors – Cutting Edge		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has ORER ever employed Cutting Edge in any capacity or is it considering employing Cutting Edge? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator has neither employed nor is considering employing Cutting Edge at this point in time.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	173
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Contractors – Ikon Communications		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has ORER ever employed Ikon Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing Ikon Communications? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

The Officer of the Renewable Energy Regulator has neither employed nor is considering employing Ikon Communications at this point in time.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	174
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Contractors – CMAX Communications		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has ORER ever employed CMAX Communications in any capacity or is it considering employing CMAX Communications? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator has neither employed nor is considering employing CMAX Communications at this point in time.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	175
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Contractors – Boston Consulting Group		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has ORER ever employed Boston Consulting Group in any capacity or is it considering employing Boston Consulting Group? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator has neither employed nor is considering employing Boston Consulting Group at this point in time.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	176
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Contractors – McKinsey & Company		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Has ORER ever employed McKinsey & Company in any capacity or is it considering employing McKinsey & Company? If yes, provide details.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator has neither employed nor is considering employing McKinsey & Company at this point in time.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
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Budget Estimates 2011-2012, May 2011

Answers to questions on notice

Climate Change and Energy Efficiency portfolio

Outcome:	1	Question No:	177
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Government Payments of Accounts		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Has ORER 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.)
- b. 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?
- c. Where interest is being paid, what rate of interest is being paid and how is this rate determined?

Answer:

- a. Not all contractors/consultants have been paid within 30 days due to services not having being completed and issues with Service Order forms.

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) has paid the following percentage of its accounts within 30 days for 2010-11 financial year to date.

- Small Business – 86.3 per cent.
 - Medium to Large Business – 90 per cent.
- b. The ORER has not received any claims relating to interest applied to the late payment of invoices.
 - c. Not applicable.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	178
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Legal costs		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What sum did ORER spend on legal services FYTD within the department and agency? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- b. What sum did ORER spend on legal services FYTD from the Australian Government Solicitor? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- c. What sum did ORER spend on legal services FYTD from private firms? Please provide a list of each service and costs.
- d. What sum did ORER spend on legal services FYTD from other sources? Please provide a list of each service and costs.

Answer:

- a. The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) spent \$294,953.60 (GST exclusive) financial year to date. The breakdown is below:
 - legal advice – appeal matter – \$14,359.65;
 - legal advice – contract matter – \$46,894.00;
 - legal advice – investigation and compliance matters – \$48,394.50;
 - legal advice – interpretation of legislation – \$65,236.00;
 - legal advice – interpretation of policy – \$4,682.50;
 - legal advice – application matters – \$2,845.00;
 - legal advice – appeal matter – \$22,110.00;
 - Liable Parties Professional Services – \$18,278.00;
 - General Professional Services legal advice – \$55,453.95; and
 - advice on supplier service order – \$16,700.

- b. The ORER spent \$278,253.60 (GST exclusive) for legal services from the Australian Government Solicitor. The breakdown is below:
- legal advice – appeal matter – \$14,359.65;
 - legal advice – contract matter – \$46,894.00;
 - legal advice – investigation and compliance matters – \$48,394.50;
 - legal advice – interpretation of legislation – \$65,236.00;
 - legal advice – interpretation of policy – \$4,682.50;
 - legal advice – application matters – \$2,845.00;
 - legal advice – appeal matter – \$22,110.00;
 - Liable Parties Professional Services – \$18,278.00; and
 - General Professional Services legal advice – \$55,453.95.
- c. The ORER spent \$16,700 (GST exclusive) for legal services from Mallesons for the preparation and reviewing of the service order.
- d. Nil.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	179
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Executive Coaching and Leadership Training		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

In relation to the purchase of executive coaching and/or other leadership training services purchased by the ORER, please provide the following information FYTD:

- a. Total spending on these services
- b. The number of employees offered these services and their employment classification
- c. The number of employees who have utilised these services and their employment classification
- d. The names of all service providers engaged

For each service purchased from a provider, please provide:

- i. The name and nature of the service purchased
- ii. Whether the service is one-on-one or group based
- iii. The number of employees who received the service and their employment classification
- iv. The total number of hours involved for all employees
- v. The total amount spent on the service. A description of the fees charged (i.e. per hour, complete package)

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

1. The location used
2. The number of employees who took part on each occasion
3. The total number of hours involved for all employees who took part
4. Any costs the department or agency's incurred to use the location

Answer:

- a. \$8,960.00.
- b. 17. Employment classification ranges include the Renewable Energy Regulator, Executive Level (EL) 2 and EL 1.
- c. Two (both EL 1).
- d. Centre for Public Management.

- i. *From Management to Leadership* – residential training program for staff moving into positions with leadership requirements.
- ii. Group session.
- iii. Two (both EL 1).
- iv. 64 hours.
- v. \$8,960.00 (two places at a flat fee of \$4,480 per place).

The above service was provided at a location other than the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator's own premises.

1. The Briars, Bowral, NSW.
2. Two.
3. 64.
4. No additional costs beyond the flat fee were incurred.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	180
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Paid parental leave		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

Is ORER providing its employees with payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme? Please list how many staff are eligible to receive payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme. Please list how many staff are in receipt of these payments.

Answer:

All Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) staff are eligible to receive payments under the Government's Paid Parental Leave scheme. No ORER staff are currently on Parental Leave and hence none are in the receipt of these payments.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	181
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Workpoint space		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. For the ORER please list the occupied workpoint space allocated per person.
- b. Does this adhere to the Government's Commonwealth Property Management Guidelines (the Guidelines)? Explain.
 - I. If yes, please explain if any refurbishment was required to meet the Guidelines and what the costs were.
 1. What savings did the ORER achieve by meeting the Guidelines?
 2. How much of these savings has the ORER kept?
 - II. If no, please give details why it does not, including whether an exemption has been received by the Finance Minister.
 1. What funding has been taken from the ORER because they do not meet the Guidelines?
 2. Are there plans to meet the Guidelines? Please explain.

Answer:

- a. The average workstation density for the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator, is 14.58 square metres per work point.
- b. Yes. There was no refurbishment required to meet the Guidelines.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	182
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Staffing		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. How many permanent staff have been recruited this FYTD?
- b. What classification are these staff?
- c. How many temporary positions exist or have been created this FYTD?
- d. This FYTD, how many employees have been employed on contract and what is the average length of their employment period?

Answer:

- a. 12.
- b. Two Executive Level 2, four Executive Level 1, three APS Level 6, one APS Level 5 and two APS Level 4.
- c. 13.
- d. 13. The average length of these contracts is six months.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	183
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Staffing – Efficiency Dividend/Budget Cuts		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. Have staffing numbers been reduced as a result of the efficiency dividend and/or other budget cuts? If so, where and at what classification?
- b. Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details ie. reduction target, how this will be achieved, services/programs to be cut etc.
- c. What changes are underway or planned for graduate recruitment, cadetships or similar programs? If reductions are envisaged please explain including reasons, target numbers etc.

Answer:

- a. The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) staff numbers have not been reduced as a result of the efficiency dividend or budget cuts.
- b. The ORER has no plans for any staff reduction.
- c. The ORER participates in the Department's graduate recruitment program. No changes are currently planned to this arrangement.

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Outcome: 1 **Question No:** 184
Program: ORER
Division/Agency: ORER
Topic: Hospitality and entertainment
Hansard Page EC: Written

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What is the Department's hospitality spend FYTD?
- b. Please detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.
- c. Please detail any catering costs, listing the cost of food and beverages, and include a separate list of alcohol costs.
- d. What is the Department's entertainment spend FYTD?
- e. Please detail date, location, purpose and cost of all events.

Answer:

- a. The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator's (ORER) financial year to date hospitality spend is \$646.45 (GST exclusive).

b.

Date	Location	Purpose	Cost (GST exclusive)
July 2010	Canberra	Working Lunch meeting with stakeholders	\$55.09
October 2010	Canberra	Working Lunch meeting with stakeholders	\$112.27
November 2010	Canberra	Working Lunch meeting with stakeholders	\$238.91
March 2011	Canberra	Working Lunch meeting with stakeholders	\$240.18

- c. The above costs are catering costs. There was no alcohol provided to the working lunches.
- d. The ORER's financial year to date entertainment spent is \$1,025.36 (GST exclusive).

e.

Date	Location	Purpose	Cost (GST exclusive)
September 2010	Canberra	Office function	\$216.36
October 2010	Canberra	Office function	\$85.91
February 2011	Canberra	Launch of Clearing House	\$723.09

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Outcome: 1 **Question No:** 185
Program: ORER
Division/Agency: ORER
Topic: Education Expenses
Hansard Page EC: Written

Senator Fisher asked:

Please detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for ORER. Include what type of course, the cost and how many participants.

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator spent \$1,250 (GST exclusive) on education expenses.

Course Name	Participants
Bachelor of Communication (Honours) Creative Communication (University of Canberra)	1
Advanced Diploma of Public Relations (Canberra Institute of Technology)	1

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	186
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Advertising		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What communications programs has the department or any agency within the portfolio undertaken, or are planning to undertake FYTD?
- b. For each program, what is the total spend?

Answer:

- a. In the current financial year the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator conducted a communications program to inform stakeholders about the recent legislative changes to the Renewable Energy Target (RET). This program provided information about the split of the RET into a large and small scale technology market, the introduction of the Clearing House and a number of other amendments to the legislative framework for the RET. The program included workshops, representation at industry conferences and events, email updates and website updates.
- b. The total spend for the program was \$102,000 FYTD.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	187
Program:	ORER		
Division/Agency:	ORER		
Topic:	Media monitoring		
Hansard Page EC:	Written		

Senator Fisher asked:

- a. What was the total cost of media monitoring services, including press clippings, electronic media transcripts etcetera, provided to the ORER FYTD?
- b. Which agency or agencies provided these services?

Answer:

The Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator (ORER) does not directly contract media monitoring services. Media monitoring services are provided to the ORER by the Department.