

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

—Additional Estimates Hearing—February 2012

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Freedom of Information

Question: 86

Written Senator Ryan

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 30 March 2012

1. Has the Department/agency received any advice on how to respond to FOI requests?
2. What was the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for 2009-10 and 2010-11?
3. What is the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for this financial year to date?
4. 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?
5. 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?
6. How many conclusive certificates have been issued in relation to FOI requests for this financial year to date?

Answer

1 The FOI Commissioner has written to the heads of the parliamentary departments stating, that in his view (and contrary to long-held opinion), the parliamentary departments are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. The matter is being examined.

2 DPS nonetheless endeavours to answer requests for information where possible within the resources available. To that end, relevant DPS staff avail themselves of FOI information sessions made available (free of charge) through the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and also through legal firms, such as the Australian Government Solicitor.