

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance and Deregulation

Outcome/Program: 1/1.1

Topic: Greens and Independents policy costing

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: F15

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Tuesday, 2 April 2013

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) How many costings the Department has undertaken for the Australian Greens to date?
- b) What costings, since the previous answer provided at 2012 Supplementary Budget Estimates, have been undertaken? Please provide details and a copy of each costing.
- c) How many of these Greens costings considered at Cabinet meetings?
- d) What Departmental resources have been allocated to costing requests on behalf of the Greens?
- e) How Departmental employees would work on these costings? Has the Department had to increase staff levels to undertake these costings?
- f) Now the Parliamentary Budget Office is set up, will the Department of Finance refer the Greens costings to the PBO? If not why not?
- g) How many costings has the Department has undertaken for the Independents to date?
- h) What costings, since the previous answer provided at 2012 Supplementary Budget Estimates, have been undertaken? Please provide details and a copy of each costing.
- i) How many Independents costings were looked at Cabinet meetings?
- j) What Departmental resources have been allocated to costing requests on behalf of the Independents?
- k) How Departmental employees would work on these

Answer:

- a) Finance has undertaken 49 costings related to requests submitted to the Government by the Greens.
- b) Since the response to October 2012 Supplementary Budget Estimates question F45 Finance has completed one Expense component of a costing.
- c) Of the 49 costings undertaken 39 have been used to inform Cabinet deliberations.
- d) Costings are part of Finance's core activities and records are not kept on resources used or time spent on specific items.
- e) Refer to response above at (d). The Department has not had to increase staff levels to undertake these costings.
- f) No. A Senator or a Member of the House of Representatives may request the Parliamentary Budget Officer to prepare a costing of a policy or a proposed policy, not the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance).

The Government's agreements with the Australian Greens (Greens) and relevant Independent Members of Parliament (Independents) include arrangements for them to submit policies to the Prime Minister for potential costing. When the Government agrees to cost an item, the costing is undertaken by Finance or the Department of the Treasury (for revenue costings) at the direction of the Government, either as part of the annual Budget process or as they are received. Finance uses its normal costings processes to undertake and complete such costings.

- g) Refer to the response to October 2012 Supplementary Budget Estimates question F45.
- h) No further costings have been undertaken since the Department's response to October 2012 Supplementary Budget Estimates question F45.
- i) All of the 22 costings were part of Cabinet deliberations.
- j) Refer to response above at (d).
- k) Refer to response above at (d).