

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates 11-14 February 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Outcome/Program:** 1.1.3 Support Services for Government Operations

**Topic:** Making the Public Service more efficient

**Senator:** Senator Ryan

**Question reference number:** 46

**Type of Question:** Written

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

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

Please provide an update of the savings achieved through pursuing further efficiencies in the way the public service operates (see media release by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Special Minister of State of 25 September 2012 [http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2012/mr\\_1982012.html](http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2012/mr_1982012.html)).

In addition, please provide the following detail:

Can you quantify the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates for reductions in air travel?

Has there been a reduction in business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Has there been a reduction in the use of external consultants and contractors? Has this impacted on the Department/agency, and how? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Provide an update of moving recruitment advertising online. Is any recruitment still in printed materials, and if yes, why? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Has the department/agency reduced its printing costs? If no, why not? Have printing costs increased, and if yes why and how much? Has the five per cent savings target been achieved? If yes, how, or if it will not, why not? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

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#### **Answer:**

1. The Department has achieved savings through:
  - a. reductions in the use of consultants and contractors;
  - b. reductions in domestic and international travel;
  - c. reductions in recruitment advertising expenditure; and
  - d. reductions in printing and publication expenditure.
2. Reductions in air travel are being achieved through reducing domestic and international travel, increasing the use of the Government's virtual meeting (telepresence) facilities, and booking cheaper fares where possible. In 2012-13 the Department has reduced budgeted air travel expenditure by 8%. The estimated savings over the forward estimates will be proportionate to the appropriation.
3. Travel is conducted in accordance with the Department's Chief Executive Instructions and Operational Guidelines. The current departmental travel policy requires Senior Executive Services (SES) employees travel economy class on single sector flights between Canberra and Sydney and Canberra and Melbourne. On all other routes SES may travel business class. Travel costs have reduced in 2012-13 and estimated savings over the forward estimates will be proportionate to the appropriation.
4. Reductions in the use of contractors and consultants are being achieved by utilising the broad range of skills within the Department. This reduces the reliance on external parties for the provision of services. In 2012-13 the Department has reduced budgeted contractor and consultant expenditure by 15%. 2012-13 actual costs YTD are lower than for the same period in 2011-12. The estimated savings over the forward estimates will be proportionate to the appropriation.
5. The Department is currently advertising online through APSjobs.gov.au. All recruitment advertising will be undertaken in accordance with the Australian Government's advertising guidelines. Recruitment advertising expenditure is a subset of the recruitment budget which has been reduced by 3%. The estimated savings over the forward estimates will be proportionate to the appropriation.
6. Reductions in printing costs will be achieved through greater reliance on online publishing. The Department assesses each publication to determine how it will be published. In 2012-13 the Department has reduced budgeted printing expenditure by 17%. The Department is on track to achieve the five per cent savings target in 2012-13 through use of the whole of government stationery and office supplies contract. The estimated savings over the forward estimates will be proportionate to the appropriation.