

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013
Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Public Service Commission

Outcome/Program: Cross Portfolio

Topic: Making the Public Service more efficient

Senator: Ryan

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Type of question: Written

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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).

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:

The consolidation of the Australian Public Service Commission's (Commission) Canberra office accommodation provided a large non repeatable efficiency saving measure, allowing so far, the termination of one lease. Options to rationalise a further small lease are under consideration. The Commission has implemented the Whole of Australian Government purchasing arrangements, for example travel, supply of information technology equipment and stationery supplies.

Further efficiencies have been sourced from administrative savings such as reducing the amount of hardcopy publishing, reducing library and subscriptions expenses.

In respect of the specific areas of savings the following information is provided.

Air travel

The Commission does not budget at an expense code level therefore savings in air travel in the forward estimates cannot be quantified.

Business flights

During 2012, the Commission's travel policy was revised to limit Business class air travel to international travel or by Senior Executives on long haul domestic travel. The Commission does not have the staffing or resources available to collect sufficiently detailed data on the class of airfares used, to allow quantification of the reduction in the number of business flights and resultant savings achieved by the Commission.

Use of external consultants and contractors

External consultants and contractors are engaged in limited circumstances, for example, where the required expertise is not available within the Commission, an independent opinion or advice is required, or a short term project or activity where the output is required or to be produced within a tight timeframe that cannot be absorbed by a work team.

The engagement of consultants and contractors will continue to be only on a case by case basis i.e. not a programmed expense item, and will be subject to a best value for money assessment, and where funds are available.

Moving recruitment advertising online

The Commission currently undertakes recruitment advertising almost exclusively online, and has done so since July 2011. As a small agency with a low volume of advertising, further savings will be small. However, budgeting is not undertaken at this level and future savings cannot be readily quantified.

Printing costs

The Commission has in place a range of measures that have contributed to a reduction in printing costs. Such as:

- availability from the Commission website of electronic versions of publications that users can "print on demand"
- reduced range of publications that are produced and circulated in hardcopy and subject to limited print run(s) e.g. numbers of copies produced
- implementation of an electronic records management systems which has reduced the number and volume of paper based records
- double sided black and white printing is set as default on printing devices
- implementation of the Whole of Government Stationery and Office Supplies (SOS) Panel arrangement is expected to provide an estimated savings of \$15k per annum for the procurement of paper.

As the Commission does not budget at an expense code level, overall savings in printing costs in the forward estimates cannot be readily quantified.