

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2013-2014

Finance Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance

Outcome/Program: 3/3.1

Topic: Senator the Hon Eric Abetz's Electorate Office

Senator: Lundy

Question reference number: F187

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 11 April 2014

Number of pages: 5

Question:

1. What is the full physical address of Senator Abetz's electorate office?
2. What is the postal address of Senator Abetz's electorate office?
3. Can the Department advise the size (in metres squared) of Senator Abetz's electorate office?
4. What are the current entitlements around office size for a Minister?
5. What are the current entitlements around office size for a backbencher?
6. What were the current entitlements between 2008 and 2013?
7. What were the current entitlements between 1996 and 2008?
8. What were the current entitlements between 1994 and 1996?
9. Has the size of Senator Abetz's electorate office changed between 1994 and 2014? If so, how? Please set out a table which shows each financial year and the size of the electorate office during that financial year, since 1994 to 2014.
10. How long as Senator Abetz had his current lease for his electorate office?
11. When did the lease commence?
12. When is the lease due to expire?
13. Has the lease been continuous or have numerous leases been signed? If so, how many and on what dates?
14. Has the lease been renewed at any point in Senator Abetz's parliamentary career or since he became a Senator? If so, on what date/s?
15. Who are the parties to the lease?
16. Who owns the property within which the electorate office is situated?
17. What is his or her full legal name?
18. What is his or her date of birth?
19. Who is listed on the title of this property?
20. If it is a business and/or corporation, what is the ABN?
21. Is the owner of the property a party to any unincorporated associations? If so, what are the full legal names of those associations?
22. What is the value of the lease, for each financial year, since the lease began?
23. Has the rental amount fluctuated since Senator Abetz started the lease?
24. What increases in rental amounts have occurred since Senator Abetz started the lease?

25. Could you please set out in a table each financial year and the amount of rent paid since Senator Abetz commenced the lease?
26. Were any increases in rent in accordance with Tasmanian rental and tenancy legislation? If not, why not?
27. What is the value of the lease in total, since Minister Abetz has been using this electorate office?
28. Is this amount market value for the area?
29. Has an independent assessment of market value ever been undertaken? If so, when and by whom? Could I please request a copy of that market assessment. If not, why not?
30. Have there ever been discussions between the Department and Senator Abetz and/or his office regarding moving to a different location? If so, when were these discussions held? How were they held? That is, via telephone, email or written letter? What was the content and nature of those discussions?
31. Have there ever been discussions between the Department and Senator Abetz and/or his office regarding ending the lease? If so, when were these discussions held? How were they held? That is, via telephone, email or written letter? What was the content and nature of those discussions?
32. Have there ever been discussions between the Department and Senator Abetz and/or his office regarding renegotiating the terms of the lease? If so, when were these discussions held? How were they held? That is, via telephone, email or written letter? What was the content and nature of those discussions?
33. Have there ever been discussions between the Department and Senator Abetz and/or his office regarding the amount of rent paid? If so, when were these discussions held? How were they held? That is, via telephone, email or written letter? What was the content and nature of those discussions?

Answer:

1. 1st floor, 136 Davey St, Hobart, Tasmania 7000.
2. GPO Box 1675, Hobart, Tasmania 7001.
3. Senator Abetz's electorate office is combined with his Ministerial Office. The combined size is 306m².
4. The size of a Ministerial office or an Opposition Office-holder's office is not prescribed.
5. The size of an electorate office is not prescribed, however the *Senators and Members' Entitlements* handbook advises that electorate offices are typically 175m².
6. The entitlement did not change during this period.
7. In 2007, the *Senators and Members' Entitlements* handbook was amended to reflect the change in the typical size of an electorate office from 150m² to 175m². Between 1996 and 2007, the *Senators and Members' Entitlements* handbook noted the typical size of an electorate office to be 150m².
8. The entitlement did not change during this period.
9. See Attachment A.
10. The current lease was renewed on 1 October 2011.
11. The original lease commenced 1 October 2003.
12. The current lease expires on 30 September 2017.
13. Leases were signed in 2003, 2008 and 2011.
14. See Question 13.
15. Commonwealth of Australia and Sypkes Enterprises Pty Ltd.
16. Sypkes Enterprises Pty Ltd.
17. See Question 16.
18. Information is not available to the Department of Finance (Finance).

19. Finance does not have a copy of the title deed on hand. Sypkes Enterprises Pty Ltd is listed on the lease agreement.
20. 50 061 016 895.
21. Information is not available to Finance.
- 22– 25 See Attachment A.
- 26 N/A.
27. See Attachment A.
28. Yes. The market rate is significantly cheaper than all other leases for Senators and Members' offices in the Hobart CBD area.
29. The Australian Valuation Office (AVO) has prepared a market valuation report at every lease renewal. The AVO advice is provided on the basis that *the valuation is for the exclusive use of the client to whom it is addressed and is not to be used for any other purpose. Neither the whole nor any part of this valuation report or any reference thereto may be included in any published document, circular or statement, nor published in part or full in any way without written approval of the Australian Valuation Office of the form and context in which it will appear.*
- 30- 33. Approximately six months before the end of a lease, a letter or email is generally sent to a Senator or Member informing them that the lease will expire shortly. The letter seeks the Senator or Member's view about remaining in the tenancy, including issues that need to be raised with the lessor as part of the lease negotiations. Individual discussions with Senators and Members are private.

QON 187 Attachment A
Senator Abetz Accommodation

<u>Senator Abetz - 136 Davey Street, Hobart</u>				
<u>Year</u>	<u>Rent pa (\$)</u>	<u>Rent Financial Year (\$)</u>	<u>Area (m²)</u>	<u>Rent change date</u>
1996/97	\$34,500.00	\$34,500.00	185	Rent commenced 1/6/96 (negotiated to valuation)
1997/98	\$35,304.92	\$35,304.92	185	Rent reviewed 1/7/98 (negotiated)
1998/99	\$35,304.92	\$35,304.92	185	
1999/2000	\$35,304.92	\$35,304.92	185	
2000/01	\$35,304.92	\$35,304.92	185	
2001/02	\$35,304.92	\$35,304.92	185	
2002/03	\$58,286.00	\$52,540.73	185/306	
2003/04	\$58,286.00	\$58,286.00	306	
2004/05	\$58,286.00	\$58,286.00	306	
2005/06	\$58,286.00	\$58,286.00	306	
2006/07	\$58,286.00	\$58,286.00	306	
2007/08	\$65,774.00	\$63,902.00	306	
2008/09	\$70,380.00	\$69,228.50	306	Rent reviewed 1/10/08 (negotiated to valuation)
2009/10	\$73,440.00	\$72,675.00	306	Rent reviewed 1/10/10 (negotiated to valuation)
2010/11	\$73,440.00	\$73,440.00	306	Rent reviewed 1/10/09 (negotiated to valuation)

QON 187 Attachment A
Senator Abetz Accommodation

2011/12	\$76,500.00	\$75,735.00	306	New lease 1/10/11 (negotiated to valuation)
2012/13	\$78,795.00	\$78,030.00	306	Rent reviewed 1/10/12 (fixed 3%)
2013/14	\$81,138.85	\$80,552.89	306	Rent reviewed 1/10/13 (fixed 3%)
Total rent 1/7/96 to 30/6/14	\$1,010,272.72			