

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

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman
Outcome/Program: 1
Topic: Freedom of Information

Senator: Ryan
Question reference number: 81
Type of question: Written
Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12 July 2013

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- (1) Has the department/agency received any updated advice on how to respond to FOI requests?
- (2) What is the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for this financial year to date?
- (3) How many FOI requests has the Department received for this financial year to date?
- (4) How many requests have been denied and how many have been granted?
- (5) Has the department failed to meet the processing times outlined in the *FOI Act* for any requests? If so, how many and why?
- (6) Do any of these requests remain outstanding? If so, how many and why?

Answer:

- (1) Yes. The Office has received advice and guidelines as issued by the Australian Information Commissioner on its website at:

<http://oaic.gov.au/publications/guidelines.html>

The Office sought advice and guidance from the AGS to improve its processing of FOI requests generally and on a case by case basis.

- (2) The total cost to the Office of processing FOI requests for this financial year to date has not yet been calculated and reported. Costs are reported on an annual basis to the Australian Information Commissioner by 30 July and are published in the Information Commissioner's FOI Annual Report.

- (3) The Office received 91 requests relating to FOI for the period to 30 June 2013.
- (4) Of the 91 requests, the Office granted 20 requests in full; 39 requests in part; refused 15 requests; transferred 1 request in its entirety; transferred part and declined part of 1 request, and considered 5 requests invalid. Five requests were withdrawn or lapsed. Three were requests from other agencies by way of consultation with us; 1 was an inquiry and 1 is still in progress.
- (5) The Ombudsman's office has met the processing time outlined in the FOI Act for all requests.
- (6) N/A.