

Department/Agency: Department of the Senate

Topic: Freedom of Information

Senator: Senator Ryan

Question reference number: 25

Type of question: Written

Questions

1. Has the department/agency received any updated advice on how to respond to FOI requests?

Answer

Three parliamentary service employees met with a representative of the Information Commissioner on 25 July 2012 to clarify certain questions that the parliamentary departments had in relation to handling FOI requests. The information supplied clarified issues in relation to the Presiding Officers and quarterly/annual reports, requests involving third parties, the publication of the disclosure log, and how requests should be considered on a case by case basis. There was also discussion about issues related to parliamentary privilege and what the term “in possession” meant in relation to parliamentary documents.

2. What is the total cost to the department/agency to process FOI requests for 2011-12?

Answer

Not applicable.

3. How many FOI requests did the department/agency receive in 2011-12?

Answer

A total of six FOI requests were received in 2011-12.

4. How many requests were denied and how many were granted?

Answer

Of the six requests received, one was transferred to the Department of Parliamentary Services, and for the second there were no documents that met the request. In the remaining four requests, information was collated and provided.

5. Did the department fail to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests?

If so, how many? Do any of these requests remain outstanding?

Answer

Responses for all six requests were provided within the required timeframe. Due to an administrative oversight, initial acknowledgements were late in three cases.

No requests are currently outstanding.

6. What is the total cost to the department to process FOI requests for this financial year to date?

Answer

Not applicable.

7. How many FOI requests has the Department received for this financial year to date?

How many requests have been denied and how many have been granted? Has the department failed to meet the processing times outlined in the FOI Act for any requests? If so, how many and why? Do any of these requests remain outstanding? If so, how many and why?

Answer

Not applicable.