

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Portfolio

Question No. 104

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 12 February 2013:

Staffing reductions

- a) Are there any plans for staff reduction? If so, please advise details including if there is a reduction target, how this will be achieved, and if any services/programs will be cut.
- b) If there are plans for staff reductions, please give the reason why these are happening.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The following agencies returned nil responses:

Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity, Administrative Appeals Tribunal, Australian Federal Police, Australian Human Rights Commission, Australian Law Reform Commission, Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre, Office of Parliamentary Counsel, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and Insolvency and Trustee Service Australia.

The Australian Government Solicitor (AGS) is a government business enterprise operating on a commercial and competitive basis in providing legal and related services to government and its agencies. AGS does not receive any Budget or other appropriations and its employees are engaged outside of the *Public Service Act 1999*. The question is therefore not applicable to AGS.

Attorney-General's Department

- a) Average staffing levels (ASL) will continue to be reduced in 2012-13 as detailed in the 2012-13 Portfolio Budget Statements. There are no plans to offer further voluntary redundancies at this stage.
- b) The reduction to ASL will result from terminating programs and specific budget savings measures, including the one-off 2.5% Efficiency Dividend.

The department has implemented a rigorous recruitment approval process to assess recruitment activity against all vacancies both ongoing and non-ongoing. When a vacancy arises it is to be filled from within the department if possible, prior to external recruitment action being commenced. Reductions will be achieved across the whole Department rather than in relation to specific areas, classifications, services or programs.

Australian Customs and Border Protection Service

a) Customs and Border Protection is anticipating achieving an average staffing level for 2012-13 of 5,100, as reported in the 2012-13 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements. No programs or services will be ceased in achieving this target.

b) The reduction in staff numbers across 2012-13 will be managed, wherever possible, through natural attrition and by not backfilling vacant positions. Where voluntary redundancies are required, these will be targeted to wherever possible areas of lowest business risk.

These staffing reductions are necessary in order to manage the impact of the one off 2.5% efficiency dividend, the ongoing efficiency dividend, as well as other budget savings/offsets.

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation

a) While overall staff growth has been deferred indefinitely ASIO will continue to recruit new intelligence professionals and technical officers within budget allocations and increase the skill-set of existing officers to meet the increasingly diverse challenges of our security environment.

b) N/A

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (CDPP)

a) In the 2012-2013 Portfolio Budget Statements the staffing levels expected for 2012-13 is anticipated to be ASL of 504. Reduction will be achieved across the broad range of office functions rather than in relation to specific areas, classifications, services or programs.

b) These reductions are due to budget reductions and an increase in the Efficiency Dividend.

Australian Crime Commission

a) Yes. Any reductions in staff will, where possible, be achieved through natural attrition. The ACC operates a scalable business model and resources will continue to be allocated to the highest threat priorities.

b) ACC revenue will reduce in 2013-14 and funding for positions associated with the revenue items will cease. Some ACC costs will also increase for property, ICT and employee expenses which will impact on the ACC's budget allocations.

Australian Institute of Criminology

a) The Institute is planning to reduce staff numbers as a result in the tightening of the agency's budget position.

b) Two non-ongoing contracts will be terminated early and one ongoing employee will be offered a voluntary redundancy. The reduction in staff is supplemented by a restructure of the research program and changes to some ongoing research projects due to budget funding cuts.

CrimTrac

a) CrimTrac is currently seeking to reduce staffing levels through natural attrition, however, no specific reduction target has been specified. No services/programs will be cut as a result of these planned staff reductions.

b) CrimTrac continues to focus on ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of its services. As such, the agency, via its Executive Staffing Committee and Executive Leadership Team, regularly reviews the structure and resource allocation of its corporate and business functions to ensure alignment with CrimTrac's priorities.

Family Court of Australia and Federal Magistrates Court

As at the end of February 2013, the courts' average staffing levels are 218 (FMC) and 562 (Family Court). These will be subject to further review over the coming months noting the courts' financial pressures.

Federal Court of Australia

The Federal Court is considering its response to the 2012-2013 Budget. A combination of measures including natural attrition and voluntary redundancies will be considered.

National Native Title Tribunal

The National Native Title Tribunal has no specific plans for further staff reductions in 2012-13, the agency will continue to monitor staffing throughout 2012-13 to ensure staffing levels are commensurate with the funding provided as a sub-program of the Federal Court.