

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 15 OCTOBER 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

SE12/0089 Portfolio wide - Making the Public Service more efficient

Senator Humphries asked:

Portfolio wide - Making the Public Service more efficient: Please detail how the department/agency will achieve savings over the forward estimates 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:

How will reductions in air travel spending be achieved? What is the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

What restrictions will be implemented for business flights? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

How will the use of external consultants and contractors be reduced? How will this impact on the Department/agency? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

How will printing costs be reduced? Explain if and how the department/agency will reduce its printing costs by five per cent, or if it will not, why not? How will it be determined what documents will no longer be printed? What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

How will the department/agency manage moving recruitment advertising online? Will all future recruitment advertisement be online only? If not, explain why. What are the estimated savings for each year over the forward estimates?

Answer:

The department has implemented the Whole of Australian Government (WOAG) travel arrangements and WOAG travel management company agreement. The cost of air travel has declined.

Business travel in the department is closely monitored and can only occur when a business case is prepared and approved by an expenditure delegate. Given the irregular number of trips required for carrying out departmental business it has been very difficult to quantify the savings.

DIAC has been actively reducing its reliance on external consultants and contractors. In particular, DIAC is striving to reduce its contracted ICT workforce and increase its APS ICT workforce. The department must reduce the costs associated with delivering services, and at the same time build long-term workforce capability. While it is difficult to quantify forecasted savings, our experience has shown that replacing contractor resources with APS staff achieves savings.

It is not possible to quantify the total number of documents that are printed in the department as printers and multi-function devices record the number of pages printed, as opposed to the number of documents produced. Where possible, DIAC will continue to publish documents online, which should have a flow on effect of reducing printing costs.

The department has been reducing its expenditure on recruitment advertising since the APS Gazette was published online in 2007 and will continue to advertise online. By managing recruitment advertising online, the department has recorded savings of almost 50 per cent since the 2009–10 financial year. In accordance with the Department of Finance and Deregulation's Non-campaign Recruitment Advertising Policy, the department will continue to only use press advertising for recruitment in exceptional case.

MRT-RRT:

Answer:

The Migration Review Tribunal-Refugee Review Tribunal will achieve budget savings by focusing on improved management of operating costs (mainly staff and related costs, communications and processing costs) and in the medium term by increased use of technology.

The tribunals are following Government's guidelines relating to air travel, conducting most recent advertising on-line and reducing the need for printed documents.

The tribunals only use external consultants as contractors when there is a need to engage skills or knowledge that is not otherwise available to the tribunals.