

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates May 2009  
**Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government**

**Question No.:** CORP 01

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic: Funding Breakdown**

**Hansard Pages:** 12 (27/05/09)

**Senator Abetz asked:**

**Senator ABETZ**—I accept that, but we have a figure here of \$3.7 million. Was that figure obtained a bit like the broadband network figure of ‘just pluck a figure out of the air, it sounds big, it sounds good and we’ll run with it’ with no business case and no underpinning of that figure? Surely, there is some underpinning here of \$3.7 million.

**Mr Tongue**—All our costs are scrutinised by the Department of Finance, Senator. I am happy to take it on notice and we will do our best to break it down.

**Senator ABETZ**—If you could. Basically, what I do not want is one element ‘staff’ and the other element ‘outside’, but if you can break them up somewhat. I do not mean to the last dollar and cent. I would imagine there would be at least 10 or a dozen areas into which you could break that figure up.

**Mr Tongue**—We will see if we can do some grouping.

**Answer:**

Page 132 of the 2009-10 Budget Paper 2 discloses funding provided to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government to implement the Nation Building and Jobs Plan. The implementation costs include program management and compliance activities.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.** CORP 02

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Minister and Parliamentary Secretaries Division of Responsibilities

**Hansard Page:** 19 (27/05/09)

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—Could I just ask finally on the Corporate area, can you just explain to me the division of responsibilities between the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary/s and how the process works within the Department? I am not sure if that is a question for you or for the Minister. I think it would be for you, Mr Tongue.

**Senator Conroy**—I can seek some information. What would happen if it is either agreed between the Ministers, or the Prime Minister will sometimes set out individual areas? I will seek some information from the Minister and we will provide whatever is available.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—I think this would be, and what we used to have—what were they?—letters from the Prime Minister.

**Senator Conroy**—That is what I am saying, I will seek whatever information is available and provide it to the Committee.

**Answer:**

Please refer to the Prime Minister's statement 'Changes to the Federal Ministry' of 6 June 2009.

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**Question No. CORP 03**

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic: Employees with Disability**

**Hansard Pages:** Written Question

**Senator Boyce asked:**

1. How many people with a disability were employed full-time and how many part-time? What classifications were these staff employed under?
2. What percentage of staff in the Department had a disability at March 30, 2008 and March 30, 2009?
3. What programs does the Department have to encourage the employment of people with a disability?

**Answer:**

1. As at 30 March 2009, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government had 22 employees who indicated that they had a disability. All 22 employees were employed full-time and on an ongoing basis. Staff are employed across a range of classifications, including senior executive positions.
2. As at 30 March 2008, 1.7% of the Department's employees had indicated they had a disability. As at 30 March 2009 1.8% of the Department's employees had indicated they had a disability.
3. In December 2008, the Department launched its Disability Support Strategy 2008-10 as the primary vehicle for raising disability awareness in the Department, supporting current departmental employees with a disability, and encouraging and supporting the future employment of people with a disability. Programs include:
  - events promoting awareness of disability issues through the Department's Diversity and Equity Network;
  - promotion of the Department's support of employees with disabilities as part of the Department's Induction Program;
  - training for managers and leaders so that they are aware of, understand and meet the expectations placed on them, through leading by example and fostering a diverse culture;
  - a clause in the current and future Collective Agreements outlining the Department's commitment to respecting and valuing people with a disability;
  - registration and engagement with the National Recruitment Coordinator and Disability Employment Network; and
  - clearly outlining in all recruitment applications that 'fair, equitable and non-discriminatory consideration is given to applicants' and that additional assistance with recruitment processes, such as interviews, is available to applicants with special needs.

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Additional Budget Estimates May 2009  
**Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government**

**Question No.:** CORP 04

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Media Monitoring

**Hansard Pages:** 13 (27/05/09)

**Senator Abetz asked:**

**Senator ABETZ**—And your anxiety to get me to ask questions seems to be somewhat misplaced, I would imagine, given your commentary just then. Given the sensitivity, can I ask you, does the media monitoring these days also include monitoring of blogs?

**Mr Banham**—It can, Senator.

**Senator ABETZ**—There we go; it can.

**Senator Conroy**—I would certainly say that I hope so. In the new media world, I would hope that it is monitoring all relevant media.

**Senator ABETZ**—I am not critical; I am just asking. Once again, thanks for your intervention, Minister. Can you tell us which blogs?

**Mr Banham**—I would not have that information. I can get that. I am not actually aware that we are monitoring blogs, but the media monitoring service can monitor blogs.

**Senator ABETZ**—On notice, then, if you monitor any blogs, can you let us know which ones, in general terms?

**Answer:**

The Department does not specifically monitor blogs.

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**Question No.:** CORP 05

**Division/Agency:** Corporate Services

**Topic:** Media Monitoring Service

**Hansard Pages:** 13 (27/05/09)

**Senator Abetz asked:**

**Senator ABETZ**—One thing you do engage in very well is Twitter. Can I ask whether this portfolio shares the media monitoring with the Shadow Minister's office?

**Mr Banham**—No, we do not.

**Senator Conroy**—That is a decision for the Minister, Senator Abetz. My understanding is that across the previous Government and this one that is a decision taken by each individual Minister.

**Senator ABETZ**—That is right.

**Senator Conroy**—When I was a Shadow, in some cases I was forwarded by my Minister copies of the material and in some cases I was not. So, it is down to the individual discretion of the Minister.

**Senator ABETZ**—That is right. Thank you very much for that. That is all information that was well known to all of us. Why has the Minister exercised his discretion not to share the media monitoring with the Shadow Minister?

**Senator Conroy**—I am happy to take that on notice, and if the Minister has got anything he would like to pass on to the Committee—

**Answer:**

The Minister is extending the same courtesy shown to him when he was in Opposition.