

Environment, Communications and the Arts Reference Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Inquiry into Energy Efficient Homes Package (Ceiling Insulation)

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Question: 1

Topic: Documents dealing with Home Insulation Program

Type of Question: Question on Notice

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April 2010

Number of pages: 1

During 2009 how many documents would your part of the PM&C would have processed to cabinet dealing specifically with the Home Insulation Program?

I am afraid I am going to ask you how many and upon what dates did you process through to cabinet documents relating specifically to the Home Insulation Program. I presume you also managed the traffic back the other way from cabinet to PM&C

Can you please indicate the number of cabinet minutes which referred specifically to the Home Insulation Program since its inception in 2009?

CHAIR—In my earlier question I think I phrased the time frame as ‘during 2009’ but I should have asked that question with ‘and up until the conclusion of the Home Insulation Program, its suspension in February this year’. Sorry, indeed I would hope there might be some request for briefings thereafter, so I think I will make that an open-ended question since the commencement of 2009 to date.

Which cabinet committees or sub committees were provided with documents relating to the Home Insulation Program or the Renewable Energy Bonus Scheme? How often and when? Who are the core members of these committees and were other ministers co-opted into any of these committees, if so, which, who and when?

Answer:

Between 1 January 2009 and 9 April 2010, the Home Insulation Program (HIP) and/or the Renewable Energy Bonus Scheme (REBS) were dealt with as follows:

- relevant matters were considered by Cabinet, the Ministry and relevant Cabinet Committees on 28 occasions;
- 33 Cabinet documents which mentioned or dealt with HIP and/or REBS were considered by Cabinet and relevant Committees;
- 24 Cabinet minutes were circulated which mentioned or dealt with HIP and/or REBS;
- relevant Committees were the Strategic Priorities and Budget Committee, the Expenditure Review Committee and the Parliamentary Business Committee;
- Committee meetings were attended by members of the committees and relevant ministers were co-opted as necessary. Membership of the relevant Committees is at Attachment A.

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Attachment A

Question: 1

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MEMBERSHIP OF RELEVANT CABINET COMMITTEES

Strategic Priorities and Budget Committee

Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister

Treasurer

Minister for Finance and Deregulation

Expenditure Review Committee

Treasurer

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister for Finance and Deregulation

Minister for Trade

Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Minister for Human Services and Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation and Corporate Law

Assistant Treasurer

Parliamentary Business Committee

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

Cabinet Secretary

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Attorney-General

Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister

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Question: 2

Topic: Inclusion of Home Insulation Program in the Stimulus Package

Type of Question: Question on Notice

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April 2010

Number of pages: 1

Somebody somewhere made a decision at some stage to put to the cabinet or to the SPBC a stimulus package that included the Home Insulation Program. Which department did that come from?

Answer:

The Home Insulation Program (HIP) formed part of the Nation Building and Jobs Plan (NBJP) announced on 3 February 2009.

Central Agencies (Prime Minister and Cabinet, Treasury and the Department of Finance and Deregulation) were commissioned by the Government to provide papers regarding the NBJP.

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Question: 3

Topic: Energy Efficiency Task force report

Type of Question: Question on Notice

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April 2010

Number of pages: 1

Did the energy efficiency task force provide a report at the conclusion of its work? Could the report or outcomes or final outputs of that task force be made available to the committee?

Answer:

The Energy Efficiency task force prepared a report that was provided to the Prime Minister in September 2008, in advance of consideration of the report's findings by Cabinet.

As the content of the report was substantially reflected in material that was submitted to Cabinet, the Department considers that it would be inappropriate to provide a copy of it to the Committee on the basis that to do so would disclose the deliberations of Cabinet

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Question: 4

Topic: Written Protocols

Type of Question: Question on Notice

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April 2010

Number of pages: 4

Could you provide on notice any of those written protocols (for agencies and departments) relating to coordination mechanisms and related issues?

Answer:

An informal process was established with States and Territories and Commonwealth agencies to inform the Office of Co-ordinator General of upcoming events and announcements across the NB-ESP. The National Partnerships Agreement states that the Commonwealth and States and Territories together will work in partnership to reach prior agreement on the nature and content of any events, announcements, promotional material or publicity relating to activity under this agreement.

The OCG regularly encouraged Commonwealth and State and Territory communication contacts to send through information for the consideration of the relevant minister's office and to assist in planning and scheduling content for the NB-ESP website.

Commonwealth line agencies managed event and announcements directly with their Ministers and provided relevant information to OCG as required.

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Question: 5

Topic: Discussions with Senator Arbib

Type of Question: Question on Notice

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April 2010

Number of pages: 1

Subsequent to those two (August and September) monthly reports, what discussions were had between you and Senator Arbib about the take-up issues in these programs?

Answer:

Although there is no record of any formal discussions with Senator Arbib and the Department on the issues raised in these reports with respect to the take-up of the energy efficiency programs discussions regarding progress against the Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan’s milestones and performance levels occurred on an ongoing basis.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Question: 6

Topic: Correspondence between Minister Garrett and the Prime Minister

Type of Question: Question on Notice

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April 2010

Number of pages: 1

Did the correspondence from Minister Garrett to the Prime Minister, dated 14 August, 27 August, 28 October and 30 October, pass from the Prime Minister's office to the OCG or the department for consideration, advice or response? Did those Letters go to cabinet or to a cabinet subcommittee? And could you advise when they went to cabinet or to a cabinet subcommittee and, if they went to a cabinet subcommittee, which subcommittee?

Answer:

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet provided advice to the Prime Minister in relation to the correspondence from Minister Garrett dated 27 August, 28 October and 30 October 2009. Those briefings referred to and were about the deliberations of Cabinet or sub-committees of Cabinet concerning changes to the Home Insulation Program; therefore copies of these briefings are not provided.

The correspondence dated the 14 August 2009 was submitted to the Strategic Priorities and Budget Committee of Cabinet (SPBC) soon after its receipt. The Department provided advice in the context of the Committee's consideration of the matters raised by Minister Garrett.