

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Additional Estimates

2014 - 2015

**Department/Agency: Treasury**

**Question: AET 53**

**Topic: Foreign investment policy**

**Reference: Hansard page no. 37 - 26 February 2015**

**Senator: Ketter, Chris**

**Question:**

53.

Senator CANAVAN: Let us get this exactly right. The former Labor government made a change to a policy on 24 April 2010, and that is the policy we are talking about, the foreign investment policy, and that change came in on the day it was announced, with no forewarning.

Mr Lonsdale: We do not have the press release going back five years. But the idea that there can be government announcements with very quick implementation and effect is not unusual and certainly not unprecedented.

Senator Birmingham: It is important in this policy space for the reason that Senator Edwards alluded to earlier, which is that you want to make sure that you bring policy intentions, once they are settled upon, to effect relatively quickly to minimise the risk of market distortions.

Senator KETTER: I have a point of clarification on the 1 March start date for the policy. Perhaps this is a question for the minister: who determined that 1 March start date for the policy?

Senator Birmingham: I would have to take that on notice, Senator Ketter.

Senator KETTER: Minister, why was 1 March chosen when clearly the department is not ready?

Senator Birmingham: I dispute the notion that the department is not ready, but I will take that on notice, along with the question of who selected 1 March. I am sure it was subject to proper processes. Obviously, I am the minister representing in this regard and I do not have sufficient knowledge of that to provide you with an appropriately informed response.

**Answer:**

53. The revised version of Australia's Foreign Investment Policy that included the new requirements for the screening of agricultural land was released on 26 February 2015. The 1 March 2015 start date was a decision of Government.