

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

2016 - 2017

Division/Agency: Structural Reform Group

Question No: 311

Topic: Harper review - Independent Market Studies

Reference: Hansard page 35 (01 March 2017)

Senator: McAllister, Jenny

Question:

Senator McALLISTER: Okay. In evidence earlier this morning, there was a brief discussion about the Harper review. The Harper review recommended a fully independent market studies function for the ACCC. Is your group giving consideration to that policy initiative?

Mr McCullough: Broadly, this division would have responsibility for implementing all of the recommendations of the Harper review that the government has endorsed. There are about 45 headline ones, and they count up to 115. As to the market studies issue, I am aware that the ACCC is currently conducting market studies, but I will have to take on notice the detail of that response.

Answer:

The Harper Review recommended a new body, the Australian Council for Competition Policy, should have the power to undertake competition studies of Australian markets. The Government is still considering the role of such a body as part of the discussions with States and Territories about competition reform.

The ACCC is already empowered under section 95G of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* to conduct market studies as it thinks fit, with the Minister's approval.