

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry Portfolio
Budget Estimates 2014-15
2-3 June 2014

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

TOPIC: Departmental Involvement in the Renewable Energy Target Review

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Bishop

QUESTION No.: BI-85

On 17 February 2014, the Government announced the review of the Renewable Energy Target scheme by an expert panel which will report by mid-2014. Currently, RET aims for 20 per cent of power drawn from renewables, or a mandated target of 41,000 gigawatts an hour of renewable energy, by 2020. The RET Review is supported by a secretariat in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet involving specialists from the Department of Industry and Environment.

1. How many specialists has the Department got working on the Review?
2. What areas are these staff specialists in?
3. Certainty and stability is important to this developing industry aren't they? Wouldn't you agree that the bipartisan support, that the RET has enjoyed over the last 13 years, has been good for the industry and consumers?
4. What is the reporting date for the Warburton Review?
5. What fees have to Committee Members?
6. How many times have the Committee met?
7. Is there any direct engagement from the Prime Minister's Office or personal staff with Mr Warburton or the Review Committee?

ANSWER

The Department of Industry has provided three officials on secondment to the RET Review Secretariat: one SES Band 1 for 24 weeks; and two EL1s for 22 weeks each. These officials have expertise in energy markets, renewable energy and broader energy policy matters.

The Terms of Reference for the RET Review are publically available on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Website (<http://retreview.dpmc.gov.au>). The Terms of Reference require the Review Panel to provide a report to the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and the Ministers for Industry and the Environment by mid-2014. The review will consider the economic, environmental and social impacts of the RET scheme, among other things, as required by the Terms of Reference. The RET review process is an independent process. The government will not speculate on the results of the review but will consider its recommendations once made.

The review is an independent process being facilitated through a secretariat in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Department of Industry, therefore, does not have responsibility for the daily functioning of the review process and cannot comment on the questions posed regarding whether fees have been paid to members of the review panel, the number of panel meetings, or the Panel's engagement with the Prime Minister's office.