

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing
26 February 2009

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: OFFICE OF SENATOR THE HON KIM CARR

TOPIC: Stimulus Package

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 26 February 2009, E83 – E84)

QUESTION No.: AI-38

Senator ABETZ—...Turning to the stimulus package at this stage, Mr Paterson told the inquiry into the stimulus package by the Finance and Public Administration Committee on 6 February that there was nothing in the package for innovation.

Mr Paterson—I do not have the transcript with me, but as I recall the evidence I gave on that occasion I indicated that there was no explicit response in that package to the Cutler report or to the Bradley report in relation to higher education. You were questioning about responses to both of those areas. I indicated to you that I expected that the government's response would deal with those issues. As yet we do not have that.

Senator ABETZ—Do you recall saying that this is not a package that is focused on that area of activity, when I asked whether the package assisted innovation?

Mr Paterson—Within the context of my response, which is a fair description of what I said. It was in the context of talking about a response to the Cutler review, which is what you had raised at the time.

Senator ABETZ—If it is not Cutler and others, are there any other specific innovation matters in the package?

Mr Paterson—The evidence that I gave to you at the time was that I expected the government's response on those issues, that is the innovation issues—

Senator ABETZ—Innovation issue generally.

Mr Paterson—It would be announced at the time that the government responded. It had a review of the whole of the national innovation system. There was a complementary review looking at higher education undertaken by Denise Bradley and the government has already indicated its intention to respond to those two reports together.

Senator ABETZ—I can understand that. Given the time constraints that we have got, I would invite the minister to have a look at his answer to the Senate on 5 February to a Dorothy Dixier from Senator Arbib and tell us on notice how Mr Paterson's answer matches up with the minister's answer on that day.

ANSWER

On 5 February 2009, I updated the Senate on a number of measures included in the Nation Building and Jobs Plan that will strengthen the innovation system. On 6 February 2009, Mr Paterson told the Finance and Public Administration Committee that the Stimulus Package did not incorporate a full response to the National Innovation System Review. These two statements are not inconsistent.