

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates 25-26 February 2009

Question: aet 20

Topic: ACCC – Possible ‘Criminal Division’

Hansard Page: Written

Senator ABETZ asked:

1. As the experience and qualifications of the current ACCC workforce is heavily weighted towards civil prosecutions what additional staffing and costs will be added to bring the ACCC up to strength to handle criminal prosecutions? Would you establish a Criminal Division of the ACCC or would a separate entity be better placed to handle criminal matters?

Answer:

ACCC staff have a range of skills and experience necessary to investigate conduct that may give rise to civil or criminal proceedings.

The ACCC currently plans to investigate criminal matters within the current establishment of the Enforcement and Compliance Division. The Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions will be responsible for any criminal prosecutions.

Additional funding for \$28.005 million was allocated to the ACCC in the 2006/07 budget for a four year period. The funding was provided for criminal cartel enforcement investigations and prosecutions. To date the ACCC has returned \$12 million due to the delay in the passage of the legislation for criminal cartel enforcement investigations and prosecutions.