

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2010-11
23 February 2011

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: Chief Scientist

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Colbeck

QUESTION No.: AI-52

1. When did Professor Sackett first advise the Minister of her intention to resign as Chief Scientist? Was it verbal or did she write to him – and on what date did this happen?
2. Did anyone ask Professor Sackett to delay in any way the public announcement of her resignation?
3. Is there any kind of order or clause Professor Sackett has signed that prevents her either from speaking publicly about aspects of her experience as Chief Scientist or about the reasons why she left the job?
4. What will the interim arrangements be between Professor Sackett's departure from the job and her replacement with a new Chief Scientist?
5. What was the total cost of Professor Sackett's (and any accompanying staff members') travel and associated expenditure during her time as Chief Scientist?
6. How many times did the High Level Coordination Group of which Professor Sackett was the Chair meet?
7. Did the Government ask Professor Sackett to provide any input into the work of its Climate Commission?
8. Was Professor Sackett asked to provide or contribute to any reports to the Government on the recent Queensland and Victorian floods?
9. Was Professor Sackett asked by the Government to provide or contribute to any reports to the parliamentary committee the Government has set up on future policy on climate change and how to price carbon?
10. Has the Government provided a formal response to the two impact statements (and accompanying reports) that were tabled at the PMSEIC meeting of 4 February? If not, when is it expected that it will do so?
11. One of those reports was titled *Challenges at Energy-Water-Carbon Intersections Report*. In part, it addresses the outlook for nuclear energy usage in Australia. Among the references it cites, it doesn't include the Electric Power Research Institute's 2007 review and comparison

of studies for Australian electricity generation planning nor the University of Sydney's 2007 report on the life cycle energy balance and greenhouse gas emissions of nuclear energy in Australia. Were those publications consulted at all?

ANSWER

1. The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research became aware of Professor Sackett's intention to resign when she tendered her written resignation on the 18 February 2011.
2. The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research did not ask Professor Sackett to delay in any way the public announcement of her resignation.
3. Professor Sackett does not have any kind of order or clause in her contract which prevents her from speaking publicly about aspects of her experience as Chief Scientist or about the reasons why she left the job.
4. The Government has commenced a process to appoint a new Chief Scientist. In the interim, the Minister has made the following appointments. Professor Margaret Shiel, CEO of the Australian Research Council, will act in the role of Chair of the Standing Committee for the Prime Minister's Science Engineering and Innovation Council (PMSEIC). Dr Michael Hughes, Director of Science within the Office of the Chief Scientist, will stand in the role of Executive Officer of PMSEIC.
5. The total cost of Professor Sackett's (and accompanying staff) travel and associated expenditure during her time as Chief Scientist was \$188,007.80 (GST exclusive).
6. The Chief Scientist chaired three face-to-face meetings and one teleconference which took place in the following order:
 - First meeting of the High Level Coordination Group (HLCG) held on 30 November 2009.
 - Teleconference between sub-groups of the HLCG referred to as 'Champions Group' held on 17 February 2010.
 - Second meeting of the HLCG held on 1 September 2010.
 - Third meeting of the HLCG held on 6 December 2010.
7. No.
8. No.
9. No.
10. The Government is currently considering the reports and will provide a response in due course.
11. No. In preparing this report, the independent expert working group consulted those materials they deemed most pertinent to their study.