

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing
01 June 2009

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH – CHIEF SCIENTIST

TOPIC: Climate Change

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 1 June 2009, E 98)

QUESTION No. BI-86

Senator ABETZ –But you have been advising the Government on what kind of a target it should have? Is that right?

Prof. Sackett –I did not say that.

Senator ABETZ –I have a transcript of an interview. It reads:

SABRA LANE: Have you been advising the Government on what kind of a target it should have?

PENNY SACKETT: Yes.

It was not designed to be a trick question. Possibly I can leave that with you on notice.

ANSWER

Advice that I have given to government has been consistent with statements that I have made publicly. As I have said in several public forums, the most recent, robust and comprehensive science indicates that in order to have a reasonable chance of keeping the global temperature rise (since 1750) at or below 2 degrees centigrade, very ambitious goals for global greenhouse gas reductions will need to be set and met. Furthermore, to achieve this result, world emissions will need to reverse trend from growing every year to decreasing every year before about 2015. Consequently, I have urged the strongest possible targets. In this sense, I have advised government on the "sort" of target for world emissions necessary to stay inside what many scientists regard as a temperature "guardrail" that to go above would risk severe negative climate change for most regions of the world. I have not advised the Australian government on exactly what targets it should set for Australia within the context of any policy or negotiation framework.