

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Estimates 22-23 October 2008

Question: sbt 70

Topic: Inquiry into Fertiliser Prices (ACCC)

Hansard Page: E109

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN —Why did the ACCC undertake an investigation into fertiliser prices?

Mr Cassidy —Because we were asked to by the government.

Senator HEFFERNAN —Who sat on the ACCC inquiry?

Mr Cassidy —It was undertaken by the ACCC.

Senator HEFFERNAN —But who were the people?

Mr Cassidy —It was done—

Mr Samuel —The whole commission is involved in that.

Senator HEFFERNAN —You can take it on notice if you want to.

Mr Samuel —Sorry? No. The whole commission was involved in the—

Senator HEFFERNAN —Where did you advertise?

Mr Cassidy —We will have to take that on notice.

Mr Samuel —Let me take that one on notice.

Senator HEFFERNAN —How many submissions did you receive?

Mr Cassidy —We are going to take that one on notice. We are actually appearing before your committee on this in a couple of weeks time, but if you want to use the time tonight so be it.

Senator HEFFERNAN —I do.

CHAIR —Senator Heffernan, we have about two minutes left and Senator Abetz kindly ceded his time.

Senator HEFFERNAN —I will put the ones that I do not get to on notice. How many farmers put in submissions?

Mr Cassidy —We will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The ACCC did not explicitly advertise the details of the fertiliser inquiry. However, the ACCC's examination of fertiliser prices was referred to in the ACCC's media

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release of 11 February 2008, *ACCC releases groceries issues paper* (MR 026/08) and on page 1 of the grocery inquiry issues paper, which was released on 11 February 2008. Details of the ACCC's examination into fertiliser prices were also contained on a separate page of the ACCC's website, inviting interested parties to provide submissions.

The ACCC contacted numerous key industry stakeholders and market participants directly, seeking submissions from manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of fertilisers, industry associations and end-user groups. The ACCC received submissions from 19 parties including 5 end-user groups representing the interests of end-user customers. The submissions from these groups included submissions prepared on the basis of consultation with group members, typically through surveys or the distribution of questionnaires to members (one group received over 80 response forms while another group provided information on the basis of 104 survey responses received).