

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2009-10
21 October 2009

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: The Textile, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) Innovation Council

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 21 October 2009, E64).

QUESTION No.: SI-41

Mr Lawson—The TCF Innovation Council has met once and we had an initial discussion of those issues. Its second meeting is next month and at that second meeting it is going to be setting its time lines of its work plan.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—How long has it been set up for? Does it have a time line?

Mr Lawson—In the meantime we have had the National Measurement Institute investigating the issue of an anthropometric database which would underpin a sizing issue—

Senator ABETZ—What sort of a database?

Mr Lawson—Human measurement.

Senator ABETZ—Thank you. I have learnt a new word, thank you.

Mr Lawson—I learnt it not so long ago myself, Senator.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—Sizes are getting bigger. It has got to do with thin models and sizing—that is what the problem is.

Senator Carr—I recommend that you read the press release from 14 August—

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—I have read it, Minister.

Senator Carr—where it details all of this.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—I have, Minister, and I have also cited it in a report I am writing. Mr Lawson, could you take that notice? By the time you answer my question you will have some more details in relation to the work plans. I am most particularly interested in the work that the council is going to do in relation to the quality mark especially concerning issues to do with mulesing in the wool industry. If you could pick up those points that would be useful, thank you.....

ANSWER

The Textile, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) Innovation Council is an ongoing forum. Members have initially been appointed from 1 September 2009 to 30 June 2012. The Council has been tasked with providing further advice on the possible introduction of a voluntary ethical quality mark, voluntary national sizing standards for clothing and footwear, and a national anthropometric (human measurement) database. The work plan for the Council was discussed at its second meeting on 17 November 2009 and with industry stakeholders in a series of workshops in late November and early December 2009 and it is expected to be finalised at a Council meeting in February 2010. Council discussed the marketing advantages that Australian TCF products would have if they could legitimately claim to be innovative, ethical and green. Clearly articulating such an Australian TCF Brand may involve a voluntary ethical quality mark, but more work needs to be done as there are already a number of existing quality mark schemes in the global market place. Mulesing in the wool industry may be relevant in the context of consideration of a voluntary ethical quality mark and related branding decisions, but that has not yet been determined.