

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

21 – 22 October 2009

Question: sbt 35

Topic: Building the Education Revolution – Computers in Schools

Hansard Page: E27 (22/10/09)

Senator BUSHBY asked:

Senator BUSHBY—Has Treasury conducted or reviewed properly conducted cost-benefit analyses on the Building the Education Revolution spend?

Mr Ray—We provided advice on the Building the Education Revolution during the course of its development.

Senator BUSHBY—Was that advice in the form of a cost-benefit analysis?

Mr Ray—Certainly the advice took into account costs and benefits of the program. I do not quite know what you mean by a formal cost-benefit analysis.

Senator BUSHBY—Well, to use the secretary's words, 'an appropriately defined cost-benefit test'.

Mr Ray—In the case of the Building the Education Revolution, it is up to the government to judge how good our advice was, but we provided them with quite a lot of advice.

Senator BUSHBY—Was that advice provided prior to the announcement?

Mr Ray—Yes.

Senator BUSHBY—Has Treasury conducted or reviewed properly conducted cost-benefit analyses on the Computers in Schools project?

Mr Ray—That was an election commitment.

Senator BUSHBY—That should not excuse the need for a proper cost-benefit analysis.

Mr Ray—So it is in a slightly different category. More than likely we provided some advice on it in the past, but I am not as familiar with it. I can take it on notice to see exactly what we provided, but we would have provided some advice on that project.

Senator BUSHBY—If you could take it on notice, that would be appreciated.

Mr Ray—Yes.

Answer:

- The National Secondary School Computer Fund was an election commitment. Since the election, Treasury has provided a range of policy advice to the Government relating to the program.