

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

19 – 20 October 2011

Question No: SBT 168 - 169

Topic: Productivity Commission Commissioned Reports

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Bushy asked:

168. How many Reports have been commissioned by the Government in your portfolio for the year 2010-11?

Please provide details of each report including date commissioned, date report handed to Government, date of public release, Terms of Reference and Committee members.

- a) How much did each report cost?
- b) How many departmental staff were involved in each report and at what level?
- c) What is the current status of each report?
- d) When is the Government intending to respond to these reports?

169. How many Reports have been commissioned by the Government in your portfolio FYTD?

Please provide details of each report including date commissioned, date report handed to Government, date of public release, Terms of Reference and Committee members.

- a) How much did each report cost/or is estimated to cost?
- b) How many departmental staff were involved in each report and at what level?
- c) What is the current status of each report?
- d).When is the Government intending to respond to these reports?

Answer:

168. Full details of Productivity Commission reports commissioned by the Government are contained in the Commission's *2010-11 Annual Report*, which was released on 28 October 2011.

The Commission had seven public inquiries and nine government-commissioned research studies underway at some time during the year. The program of government-commissioned projects is summarised in table 1.

During 2010-11 the Commission:

- completed three public inquiries begun in 2009-10 — on wheat marketing arrangements, rural research and development corporations, and aged care
- commenced three other new public inquiries, which are due for completion in 2011-12, on urban water, the economic regulation of airport services and the structure and performance of the Australian retail industry.

In terms of research studies, during the year the Commission:

- finalised five government-commissioned research studies begun the previous year — a review of the regulatory burdens on business in the business and consumer services sectors, a business regulation benchmarking study on planning and zoning and land development assessments, and studies on bilateral and regional trade agreements, the VET education and training workforce, and impacts and benefits of COAG reforms
- commenced and completed in the same year a study of emissions reduction policies and carbon prices
- commenced three other new studies — on the schools and early childhood development workforces, and the fifth stage of the review of regulatory burdens on business study (on identifying and evaluating regulatory reforms).

Details relating to the date reports are commissioned, the Terms of Reference and the Commission members involved with each report, are detailed on the Commission's website and in the respective reports. The date the report is handed to Government is published on the Commission's website.

Table 1 Program of public inquiries and other government-commissioned projects^a

| | 2009-10 | | | | | 2010-11 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2011-12 | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Month | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | |
| Public inquiries: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wheat | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rural Research and Development Corporations | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Caring for Older Australians | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Disability care and support | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Australia's Urban Water Sector | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Economic Regulation of Airport Services | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Structure and Performance of the Retail Industry | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Commissioned research studies: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Education and Training Workforce – VET | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Regulatory Burdens: Business and consumer services | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Regulation Benchmarking: Planning and zoning | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Impacts and benefits of COAG reforms ^b | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Education and Training Workforce – ECD | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Emissions Reduction Policies and Carbon Prices | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Education and Training Workforce – Schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Regulatory Burdens: Regulation reforms | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Regulation Benchmarking: Role of Local Government | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

^a Shaded area indicates the approximate duration of the project in the period covered by the table. ^b Includes consideration of Vocational Education and Training and Seamless National Economy reforms.

(a) Total estimated costs (covering salaries, direct administrative expenses and an allocation for corporate overheads) for the nine inquiries and government-commissioned research studies completed in 2010-11 are shown in table 2.

Table 2 Cost of public inquiries and other commissioned projects completed in 2010-11^a

| Government-commissioned project | Total cost |
|---|------------|
| | \$'000 |
| Wheat Export Marketing Arrangements | 1 052 |
| Rural Research and Development Corporations | 1 460 |
| Caring for Older Australians | 2 344 |
| Bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements | 1 466 |
| Education and Training Workforce - VET | 1 473 |
| Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business – Business and Consumer Services | 935 |
| Business Regulation Benchmarking – Stage 4 | 1 715 |
| Impacts and benefits of COAG Reforms (Framework Report) | 405 |
| Emissions Reduction Policies and Carbon Prices | 2 100 |

^a Includes estimated overheads.

- (b) The Commission provides general information on staffing levels in Appendix B of the *2010-11 Annual Report*. Table 3 shows the actual staffing levels for the inquiries and studies completed in 2010-11.

Table 3 Staffing of public inquiries and other commissioned projects completed in 2010-11

| <i>Government-commissioned project</i> | <i>Staffing</i> |
|---|---|
| Wheat Export Marketing Arrangements | 1 x SES 2 x Staff Level 4 2 x Staff Level 3 1 x Staff Level 2 1 x Staff Level 1 |
| Rural Research and Development Corporations | 1 x SES 1 x Staff Level 4 1 x Staff Level 3 2 x Staff Level 2 1 x Staff Level 1 |
| Caring for Older Australians | 1 x SES 4 x Staff Level 4 1 x Staff Level 3 2 x Staff Level 2 1 x Staff Level 1 |
| Bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements | 1 x SES 3 x Staff Level 4 2 x Staff Level 3 1 x Staff Level 1 |
| Education and Training Workforce - VET | 1 x SES 3 x Staff Level 3 3 x Staff Level 2 1 x Staff Level 1 |
| Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business – Business and Consumer Services | 1 x SES 3 x Staff Level 4, 2 x Staff Level 3 1 x Staff Level 1 |
| Business Regulation Benchmarking – Stage 4 | 1 x SES 3 x Staff Level 4 1 x Staff Level 3 2 x Staff Level 2 1 x Staff Level 1 |
| Impacts and benefits of COAG Reforms (Framework Report) | 1 x SES 2 x Staff Level 4 2 x Staff Level 3 1 x Staff Level 1 |
| Emissions Reduction Policies and Carbon Prices | 1 x SES 3 x Staff Level 4 3 x Staff Level 3 1 x Staff Level 2 1 x Staff Level 1 |

- (c) The current status of each report (as at 28 October 2011) is outlined fully in Appendix E of the *2010-11 Annual Report*.
- (d) The Commission does not have information on the proposed timing of Government responses to its reports.

169. Since 30 June 2011, the Government has commissioned three new projects:

- a 12 month study on *Business Regulation Benchmarking: Role of Local Government as Regulator* (reference received 4 July 2011);
- a 9 month inquiry into *Australia's Export Credit Arrangements* (reference received on 1 September 2011);
- a 12 month inquiry into *Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation* (reference received on 20 September 2011).

Full details on these projects are provided on the Commission's website at:

<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects>

- (a) Information on the estimated costs of these projects is not available at this time.
- (b) Information on staff involved in these projects is shown in table 4.

Table 4 Staffing of public inquiries and other commissioned projects commenced FYTD 2011-12

| <i>Government-commissioned project</i> | <i>Staffing</i> |
|---|---|
| Business Regulation Benchmarking: Role of Local Government as Regulator | 1 x SES 4 x Staff Level 4 2 x Staff Level 3 4 x Staff Level 2 1 x Staff Level 1 |
| Australia's Export Credit Arrangements | 1 x SES 2 x Staff Level 4 2 x Staff Level 3 3 x Staff Level 2 1 x Staff Level 1 |
| Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation | 1 x SES 2 x Staff Level 4 2 x Staff Level 3 4 x Staff Level 2 1 x Staff Level 1 |

- (c) The projects are ongoing. Information on timing of draft and final report dates is available on the Commission's website.
- (d) The Commission does not have information on the proposed timing of Government responses to its reports.