

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Industry, Tourism and Resources Portfolio  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2003-2004, 5 November 2003

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND RESOURCES  
**OUTCOME/OUTPUT:** Outcome 1, Output 1.2  
**TOPIC:** ENHANCED PRINTING INDUSTRY COMPETITIVENESS SCHEME  
**REFERENCE:** WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

**QUESTION DEST no: E684\_04**

**Senator Stott Despoja** asked:

Printers were only able to access \$48m of the \$240m BIAP - through the EPICS. Three months of this supposedly four-year scheme were lost last year when the Government prematurely closed it down. ITR are now imposing an (artificial) deadline of 30 March 2004 for the completion of projects, thus curtailing the life of the scheme by another three months. Given that time was lost due to the temporary closure of the scheme, will the Government extend the scheme until at least 30 September to compensate for it being prematurely shut down for three months last year?

**ANSWER**

The Enhanced Printing Industry Competitiveness Scheme (EPICS ) closed on 14 May 2002 for three months. Companies with projects approved prior to this date were unaffected. There was no impact on the duration of their projects or on their schedules of milestone payments.

Project applications received but not submitted to the approving Committee prior to the closure were subsequently considered soon after the re-opening date. ( The closure resulted in only one, or perhaps two, approval committee meetings not taking place.) Approvals made in August were for projects scheduled to be completed before the program end date of June 2004.

Customers have been on notice for some time that any projects approved for funding in the last year of the program would have to be completed well before 30 June 2004 to provide them sufficient time for submitting final project reports, including audit reports, so that final grant payments could be made to them before the end of the financial year. Funding for the program ends 30 June 2004. The majority of final funding approvals under the program were decided last September.

ITR's setting of the 30 March deadline for the completion of projects is an administrative measure that was always going to be implemented (irrespective of the closedown in 2002) to ensure that companies received their full grant entitlements by the program end date of 30 June 2004. In accepting funding offers in the last approval round, companies committed to completing their projects by 30 March 2004.