

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

**Budget Estimates Hearings 2005-2006, 13 February 2006**

**Question: PM 68**

**Output 3**

**Topic: Evaluation of ONA product**

**Direct on Notice: Written**

**Senator Evans asked:**

- (1) What is the process to evaluate ONA's product? Who in the National Security Division undertakes the evaluation.**

**Answer:** The 2004 Inquiry into the Australian Intelligence Agencies (AIC) by Mr Phillip Flood, AO, resulted in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) assuming greater responsibility for assisting Ministers manage the AIC, including through the provision of an overall review of the performance of these agencies, as part of a new annual AIC management cycle. The performance of the Office of National Assessments (ONA) is evaluated annually as part of this cycle. The evaluation of ONA product is conducted in parallel with PM&C advice to Ministers on AIC priorities and resource needs. The evaluation is conducted by the Defence and Intelligence Branch of National Security Division within PM&C, in consultation with relevant senior officers of PM&C. ONA is provided with the opportunity to comment on the draft evaluation report before it is finalised.

- (2) Which clients are involved in the assessment? How often is the evaluation undertaken?**

**Answer:** In addition to clients within PM&C, clients consulted as part of PM&C's preparation of its assessment of ONA in 2005 were relevant Ministerial offices (Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Defence Minister and Treasurer) and a range of senior officers in relevant policy departments, (Foreign Affairs, Defence, Treasury and Immigration and Multicultural Affairs). PM&C also sought the views of all the other AIC agencies and the Australian Federal Police on ONA's performance.

- (3) Which ministers receive the evaluation report? Which committees receive the evaluation report?**

**Answer:** The Ministers on the National Security Committee of Cabinet (the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Defence, the Attorney-General and the Treasurer) are provided with the PM&C evaluation. The members of the Secretaries' Committee on National Security also receive the PM&C evaluation before it is presented to NSC.