

## Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

### ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates Hearing – February 2010

Department of Finance and Deregulation

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

#### **Outcome 1, Program 1.1**

**Topic: Charter of Budget Honesty**

**Question reference number: F19**

**Type of Question: Hansard F&PA 31, 9 February 2010**

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**Senator Joyce asked:**

How can we have Operation Sunlight when you have completely precluded the capacity of the alternative government to cost their policies?

**Mr Tune**—Under the Charter of Budget Honesty at the moment there is provision for limited costing by the public service of opposition policies. Operation Sunlight took that further as a policy proposition and that is the issue that is still under consideration.

**Senator Joyce**—When will we get to the conclusion?

**Mr Tune**—That is a matter for the government.

**Senator Sherry**—I am happy to take it on notice for the minister.

#### **Answer:**

The Charter of Budget Honesty (Charter) was introduced in 1998. Part eight of the Charter provides a framework for costing of election commitments by the Treasury and the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

The framework only applies during the caretaker period for a general election. In this period, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition may request the Secretaries of the Treasury and the Department of Finance and Deregulation to prepare costings of their publicly announced policies.

The Charter has been in place for four elections - the 1998, 2001, 2004 and 2007 elections. The scope of the framework was not changed by the previous Government to provide the Opposition with greater access to the resources of the public service.

The Government is examining options for reform, including the role of the public service.