

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Additional Estimates 8-11 February 2010

Question: PM49a-e

Topic: Costs of expansion of COAG Reform Council

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 March 2010

Number of pages: 3

- a) **What was the total cost for the recent recruitment round undertaken by the COAG Reform Council? Please provide a breakdown of costs including advertisements, applicant travel to interviews, additional workspace costs etc.**
- b) **With regard to the recent recruitment round undertaken by the COAG Reform Council, please explain where the employment opportunities were advertised and on how many occasions?**
- c) **How many applications were received for each position? At what levels? Have successful applicants commenced work yet? As a result of this recruitment drive, what is the current level of staffing at COAG Reform Council?**
- d) **Who made the final decisions on the selection of candidates? Did the State and Territory Governments have any input in selection of candidates?**
- e) **Did the states contribute to any of the costs for this recruitment exercise and staffing expansion? If so, how much?**

Answer:

- a) Total costs for this recruitment process including advertising, travel to attend interviews and recruitment scribing was \$30,353.29. A breakdown of the costs is advertising: \$25,232.95; travel: \$1482.15; scribing: \$3638.19. No additional workspace costs were incurred. The cost to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet was \$15,176.64.
- b) Employment opportunities for the positions of Senior Advisor (Executive Level 2), Advisor (Executive Level 1) and Analyst (APS 5/6) were advertised on one

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occasion in October 2009 in the APS Gazette (APSJobs Online), Seek, The Australian, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Canberra Times, The Australian Financial Review and The Age.

- c) The COAG Reform Council undertook recruitment action to fill various positions of Senior Advisor (Executive Level 2), Advisor (Executive Level 1) and Analyst (APS 5/6) in October 2009.

In relation to the Senior Advisor (Executive Level 2) positions, the council's secretariat received 62 applications and recommended two applicants for appointment; those two applicants have commenced employment with the council.

In relation to the Advisor (Executive Level 1) positions, the council's secretariat received 76 applications and recommended one applicant for appointment. The recommended applicant withdrew their candidacy.

In relation to the Analyst (APS 5/6) positions, the council's secretariat received 135 applications and recommended four applicants for appointment. Three of those four applicants have commenced employment with the council; the fourth withdrew their candidacy.

The COAG reform Council secretariat currently has a permanent staffing level of 23 staff.

- d) The secretariat of the COAG Reform Council is established as an administrative unit within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Recruitment of staff to the secretariat is therefore undertaken in accordance with the *Public Service Act 1999*. Staff appointments are therefore approved by the Secretary of the Department or by other senior executives under a delegation of powers made by the Secretary under the Act. Non-SES staff are approved for appointment under a delegation by the Head of Secretariat (in her capacity as an SES Band 3). The States and Territories are therefore not involved in the staff selection process. As a matter of practice however, the selection panels used in the recruitment of

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SES staff have included a senior executive from a State. The Commonwealth and the States and Territories are involved in the appointment of the members of the COAG Reform Council (as distinct from the staff of its secretariat).

- e) Half of the costs (\$15,176.64) were recovered from the State and Territory governments (the COAG Reform Council is funded 50 per cent by the Commonwealth and 50 per cent by the States and Territories).