

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: PM52a-d

Topic: Dr Allan Hawke review of Ministerial Councils

Type of Question: Written

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

Number of pages: 3

- a) **What are the terms of reference for the Dr Hawke review into Ministerial Councils agreed to at the 2 July 2009 COAG meeting?**
- b) **What is the cost of this review and what proportion of the funding is the Commonwealth Government contributing?**
- c) **The original deadline for the report was November 2009. Why was an extension granted until March 2010?**
- d) **Is the report expected to be received in March 2010 and will this report be made public?**

Answer:

- a) The terms of reference for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) review of Ministerial Councils were agreed by COAG on 30 April 2009. COAG agreed to appoint Dr Allan Hawke to lead the review on 2 July 2009.

The terms of reference for the review are at **Attachment A**.

- b) At the COAG meeting on 2 July 2009, the Commonwealth and states and territories agreed to share the cost of the review of Ministerial Councils. The Commonwealth will contribute half of the costs. States and territories will contribute the remainder, with the contribution of each state and territory to be determined on a per capita basis. Secretariat support is being provided by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

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The final cost of the review is yet to be settled, but it is anticipated that its cost will be less than the \$124,000 estimated before the review commenced in July 2009. The review's cost will be comprised of the costs of Dr Hawke's professional services and his travel to meet with stakeholders. As required by the terms of reference, consultations have been undertaken with Councils, Council Chairs, their secretariats and stakeholders from overseas member countries. Dr Hawke has also consulted with First Ministers, former First Ministers, industry leaders and others with expertise in Commonwealth-state relations.

- c) In November 2009, COAG Senior Officials considered it would be desirable for First Ministers to be consulted in the course of the review. In order to allow this to occur, the reporting deadline was extended.

Dr Hawke completed consultation with Premiers and Chief Ministers on 28 January 2010. He is expected to report to COAG as scheduled.

- d) Dr Hawke is expected to present his report to the Prime Minister, as Chair of COAG in March. The report's publication will be a matter for COAG to determine.

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ATTACHMENT A

COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS

REVIEW OF MINISTERIAL COUNCILS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has requested that a review of ministerial council arrangements be undertaken.

Scope of the Review

1. The reviewer will report and make recommendations to COAG on options for rationalising ministerial councils.
2. The reviewer will have regard to the following issues:
 - a. responsiveness and accountability of ministerial councils to COAG including administrative efficiency and transparency of their operations;
 - b. measures to improve efficiency and effectiveness of ministerial council arrangements;
 - c. the net benefits of streamlining some ministerial councils to align directly with National Agreements; and
 - d. the net benefits of streamlining remaining ministerial councils on the basis of strategic integration of issues outside those covered under the national agreements and to support efficient and effective decision making.
3. In undertaking the task, the reviewer will:
 - a. take into account the views of all ministerial council members including those from other countries such as New Zealand, as well as secretariats supporting the councils; and
 - b. have regard to the protocols and principles for the operation of ministerial councils, set out in the Council of Australian Governments' Commonwealth-State Ministerial Councils: Compendium.

Timing of Report by

1. The Reviewer will report to COAG, through Senior Officials, by November 2009.