

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 2003, 26 & 27 May 2003

Question: PM 89

Outcome 1, Output 2.1

Topic: Interdepartmental review of Customs regulations ban on the export of human embryos

Direct on Notice:

Senator Harradine asked:

1. In February I asked the following questions about an inter-departmental review to be undertaken of the Customs regulations ban on the export of human embryos. Little detail was then available because the committee had not been formed. If the committee has now been formed, would you please advise me:
- a) What are the terms of reference of the committee?
 - b) What are the names of the officers on the committee and their departmental affiliations?
 - c) What is the plan for how the review will be undertaken?
 - d) What is the aim of the review ie. will it be focused on achieving an ethical outcome, advancing the research interests of scientists in this area or a commercial outcome?
 - e) Will the results of the review be made public? If not, why not?
 - f) Has the Prime Minister received representations from individuals or organisations lobbying against the ban on the export of human embryos? If so, who are the individuals/organisations and would you please provide copies of the correspondence?
 - g) Will the review be considered by the Prime Minister? If not, why not? Who will make the final decision?

Answers:

a)– e) As the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is convening this interdepartmental committee, these questions have been referred to the NHMRC.

f) The Prime Minister has not received representations from individuals or organisations lobbying against the ban on the export of human embryos.

g) The review will be considered at ministerial level. The matter of who will make the final decision on the review will need to be discussed with the Prime Minister.