

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 2004-2005, 23 and 24 May 2005

Question: PM 59

Outcome 1, Output 2.1

Topic: Meeting Minutes of Secretaries' Group on Indigenous Affairs

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Carr asked the following questions:

Budget

Part 1: Please provide a breakdown of how the additional funding is expected to be allocated across the various additional functions within PM&C?

Answer: The additional funding has been allocated to Social Policy Division, primarily to support a range of new functions including secretariat support for the Secretaries' Group on Indigenous Affairs and liaison with OIPC on Indigenous affairs.

Part 2: How many additional FTE positions have been created within PM&C to support the new arrangements, at what levels and in which Divisions/Branches?

Answer: Five additional FTE positions have been created within the Social Policy Division. The levels are 1 x SES Band 1; 1 x EL2; 1 x EL1; 1 x APS6; 1 x APS5.

Secretaries' Group on Indigenous Affairs

Part 3: A request for the minutes of the Secretaries' Group meetings has been taken on notice. Should the Government determine that it is not appropriate to release the minutes to the committee, please explain how these minutes differ in status from the notes of the People Smuggling Taskforce meetings that were provided to the Senate Select Committee on a Certain Maritime incident.

Answer: Please refer to answer provided for QON 23.

Part 4: Who determines the agenda for Secretaries' Group meetings?

Answer: The Chair, Dr Shergold, in consultation with Secretaries.

Part 5: Who prepares papers for the meetings?

Answer: The relevant department having carriage of the issue or sponsorship of a cross-agency team.

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Part 6: Prior to the release of the Secretaries' Group's first bulletin in April this year was there any other form of communication from the Secretaries' Group to assist public servants in implementing the new arrangements, which commenced last July?

Answer: OIPC and other agencies used a range of methods to inform staff of the new arrangements and how they were to be implemented.

Part 7: The first bulletin explains how public servants are expected to work together to make the new arrangements work. How was this disseminated to the staff to whom it was particularly relevant? How would other APS staff have become aware of the document and how were they encouraged to read it?

Answer: Departments were responsible for distributing the bulletins widely to relevant staff and encouraging them to read it. The bulletins are also available on the Australian Public Service Commission website for anyone to access.

Part 8: Has the Secretaries' Group been working with the Public Service Commissioner to plan and monitor the outcomes of the workshops or training for staff in ICCs and their managers in Canberra or State offices? Please provide details of any work undertaken by, or at the instruction of, the Secretaries' Group in this area.

Answer: The Australian Public Service Commission is currently delivering training to all ICCs in working collaboratively in a whole-of-government context. This training package was developed in consultation with OIPC and ICC stakeholder agencies, and was commissioned following a need identified by the Secretaries Group for a practically focussed development programme for ICC staff. The Secretaries' Group will monitor the outcomes of the training programme.

Part 9: Has the Secretaries' Group considered the issue of attracting and retaining Indigenous employees in the APS? If so, has it made any recommendations or taken any action in this regard? Please provide details.

Answer: Yes, the Secretaries' Group is currently considering the issue of Indigenous Employment in the APS.