

## Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

3.1 The committee took evidence from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), the Department of Climate Change and portfolio agencies from Monday, 26 May to Thursday, 29 May 2008.

3.2 The following issues raised with PM&C are discussed below:

- the government's election commitments;
- Prime Minister's overseas travel;
- establishment of the Office of Work and Family;
- National Policy Commission on Indigenous Housing;
- Office of National Security;
- Staff employed in the Prime Minister's official residences;
- Official functions held at the Prime Minister's official residences;
- Funding for community cabinet meetings;
- Charter letters; and
- the 2020 Summit.

### Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

3.3 At the commencement of the committee's examination of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Senator the Hon John Faulkner, the Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, began by informing the committee that he would be the sole Minister representing the Prime Minister during PM&C's appearance. He stated that the rationale behind this decision was to alleviate concerns raised during the committee's previous examination of the department whereby there was some uncertainty surrounding the separation of Ministerial responsibilities held between himself and Senator Evans.<sup>1</sup>

3.4 Senator Faulkner also informed the committee of recent changes to the *Administrative Arrangements Order* that have effected the department. This was followed by an explanation from a PM&C official who informed the committee of recent staffing and organisational changes within the department.<sup>2</sup> For a further explanation of the effect of these changes on the department see Chapter 1 of this report.

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1 Senator the Hon John Faulkner, Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, p. 63.

2 Senator the Hon John Faulkner, Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, p. 63 and Mr Mike Mrdak, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, p. 63.

### ***Government's election commitments***

3.5 Opposition Senators questioned Senator Faulkner extensively about the government's election commitments. Senator Minchin drew Senator Faulkner's attention to an answer provided in response to a Question on Notice, which sought a list of each election commitment the government had made and the allocation of agency or department that is responsible for its implementation.<sup>3</sup>

3.6 Senator Faulkner replied that he believed the answers provided to the questions on notice were satisfactory, and that all of the government's election commitments were currently available on the ALP's website.<sup>4</sup> Senator Faulkner subsequently tabled the list that he identified on the ALP website for the benefit of the committee.<sup>5</sup>

3.7 However Opposition Senators were not satisfied that a clear assessment of each promise is identified on the website, and that Senator Faulkner had provided a clear explanation as to which government agencies and departments will be responsible for delivering each promise.<sup>6</sup> Senator Faulkner agreed to take on notice a series of questions seeking further information about the government's election commitments.

### ***Prime Minister's overseas travel***

3.8 Opposition Senators questioned PM&C officials about the details of the Prime Minister's overseas travel between 27 March and 13 April 2008.<sup>7</sup> Officials provided the committee with the dates and places of the Prime Minister visit. Senator Faulkner took a series of questions on notice that sought further information about the breakdown of the costs incurred from the Prime Minister's trip. Senator Faulkner stated that the answers could not readily be provided because of the recent nature of the travel.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Establishment of the Office of Work and Family***

3.9 Government and Opposition Senators questioned PM&C officials about the establishment of the Office of Work and Family. Officials informed the committee

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3 Senator the Hon Nick Minchin, *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, p. 79.

4 Senator the Hon John Faulkner, Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, p. 79.

5 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *ALP Policy*, tabled 26 May 2008. See: [www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fapa\\_ctte/estimates/bud\\_0809/pmc/taled\\_documents/Australian\\_Labor\\_Party\\_Election\\_Committments\\_26-05-08.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fapa_ctte/estimates/bud_0809/pmc/taled_documents/Australian_Labor_Party_Election_Committments_26-05-08.pdf) (accessed 16 June 2008).

6 *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, p. 80.

7 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 5–19.

8 Senator the Hon John Faulkner, Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 19.

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that its role will be to facilitate the coordinated development of policies that affect work and family life. Furthermore, the Office of Work and Family will manage the relationship between PM&C and the Australian Institute of Family Studies which recently joined the portfolio under changes to the *Administrative Arrangements Order*.<sup>9</sup>

3.10 An official also outlined two specific outputs that the Office of Work and Family will be responsible for: the production of the State of the Family report; and providing advice with the development of family impact statements for cabinet decisions.<sup>10</sup>

### ***National Policy Commission on Indigenous Housing***

3.11 Senator Minchin questioned officials on the status and purpose of the National Policy Commission on Indigenous Housing. Specifically, Senator Minchin sought to know why some people with political party connections were invited to join the commission whilst others were not.

3.12 An official provided the committee with evidence based on a letter from the Prime Minister to the Leader of the Opposition that expresses the Prime Minister's intention that the commission should be above day-to-day politics.<sup>11</sup> The letter was subsequently tabled before the committee and details that the only politicians to be on the commission should be the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Office of National Security***

3.13 Senator Trood followed up on his previous questions of the Office of National Security from the committee's examination of Additional Estimates 2007–08.

3.14 Senator Trood asked for information about the numbers of staff employed within the office, and questioned officials on the status of the *National Security Statement*. An official informed the committee that the statement is expected to be

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9 *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, pp 108–110 and Ms Serena Wilson, Acting Deputy Secretary, Social Policy Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 25.

10 Ms Serena Wilson, Acting Deputy Secretary, Social Policy Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 25.

11 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 25–27.

12 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Correspondence from the Prime Minister the Hon Kevin Rudd MP to the Leader of the Opposition the Hon Brendan Nelson MP regarding the Indigenous Joint Policy Commission*, tabled 27 May 2008. See: [www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fapa\\_ctte/estimates/bud\\_0809/pmc/taled\\_documents/Corro\\_Dr\\_Nelson\\_27-05-08.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fapa_ctte/estimates/bud_0809/pmc/taled_documents/Corro_Dr_Nelson_27-05-08.pdf) (accessed 16 June 2008).

completed towards the end of June, and that it will be up to the government as to when the completed statement will be released.<sup>13</sup>

3.15 Senator Trood also sought information about the status of an ongoing review into homeland and border security. An official stated that the expected date of completion for the review is 30 June 2008 and that terms of reference did exist but that they have not been officially released by the Prime Minister.<sup>14</sup>

3.16 On the subject of recent commentary on the Prime Minister not visiting Japan whilst visiting other countries including China during his inaugural official overseas travel, Opposition Senators questioned officials from the Office of National Security about the rationale and implications of the Prime Minister's itinerary.<sup>15</sup>

3.17 An official stated that they did realise that there would be some cause for concern from Japan. And, nevertheless, a tight programming schedule for the Prime Minister's overseas travel made this unavoidable. The official stated:

The decision was taken to go to China on account of the invitation to the Boao forum. I think it is wrong to characterise the situation you are referring to now in this instance to Japan as having dropped off. As you are aware, visits to Japan are planned...Whenever you plan visits you go to one country before another...there can be issues around it...at the end of the day [it is] a matter of programming and where one can put the visits together.<sup>16</sup>

3.18 The committee notes that subsequent to the Budget Estimates hearings, the Prime Minister has completed a trip to Japan.

#### ***Staff employed at the Prime Minister's official residences***

3.19 Opposition Senators questioned PM&C officials about the current numbers of staff employed at the Prime Minister's official residences. Senator Faulkner informed the committee that the number of full time equivalent staff currently employed at the Lodge is 5.4 whilst at Kirribilli House two people are employed.<sup>17</sup>

3.20 Pursuing further the committee's examination of PM&C during Additional Estimates 2007–08, Opposition Senators examined the financial arrangements that the

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13 Mr Duncan Lewis, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 55–56.

14 Mr Duncan Lewis, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 56.

15 Mr Duncan Lewis, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 57–63.

16 Mr Duncan Lewis, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 60.

17 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 41–54.

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Prime Minister has put in place to reimburse funds for services provided by one of the household assistants employed at the Lodge.<sup>18</sup>

3.21 Senator Faulkner stated that an arrangement is in place whereby the Prime Minister will pay 60 per cent of the staff member's salary which covers the component of child care provided. Furthermore an official from PM&C informed the committee that the voluntary reimbursement of funds will be recorded in the department's financial statements and annual report.<sup>19</sup>

3.22 Opposition Senators also questioned Senator Faulkner about a member of the Prime Minister's staff that was identified as the Prime Minister's travel assistant.<sup>20</sup> Senator Faulkner informed the committee that the correct title for the position was in fact an executive assistant, and that the person in this position carried out various functions including assisting with invitations, gifts and travel arrangements.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Official functions held at the Prime Minister's official residences***

3.23 During previous Estimates hearings the committee has pursued issues surrounding the use of the Prime Minister's official residences for private and state functions. Opposition Senators followed up on previous questions surrounding an official state function held on Australia Day 2008 at the Lodge. Particularly, Senators asked for a full list of people who had attended the function. Senator Faulkner informed the committee of his intention to adopt a new approach and tabled this information on a six monthly basis for the benefit of transparency for the first time.<sup>22</sup>

3.24 In relation to Senator Faulkner's undertaking to table lists of attendees, he qualified under what circumstances this information would be presented before the committee in the future:

I hope the committee would agree that private dinners and the like are in a very different category. One of the issues that arises is how one defines an official function or a non-official function. I think that is very simply and easily done, because an official function is one where CERHOS and the

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18 Mr Mike Mrdak, Deputy Secretary, People, Resources and Communications Division, Government Division and Cabinet Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, pp 52–53.

19 Mr Mike Mrdak, Deputy Secretary, People, Resources and Communications Division, Government Division and Cabinet Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, pp 52–53.

20 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 42 and *Estimates Hansard* 28 May 2008, p. 28.

21 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 44.

22 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 65–72; Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Reception to celebrate Australia Day 2008: The Lodge, Canberra, Saturday, 26 January 2008*, tabled 27 May 2008. See: [www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fapa\\_ctte/estimates/bud\\_0809/pmc/taled\\_documents/Aus\\_Day\\_Reception\\_InviteList\\_27-05-08.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/fapa_ctte/estimates/bud_0809/pmc/taled_documents/Aus_Day_Reception_InviteList_27-05-08.pdf) (accessed 16 June 2008).

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet have an organising role, as opposed to a private dinner...<sup>23</sup>

### ***Funding for community cabinet meetings***

3.25 In the 2008–09 Budget Papers the government has allocated funding until 2010–11 for the provision of community cabinet meetings, to be held throughout various regions of Australia. Opposition Senators questioned PM&C officials about how the aggregate funding for the meetings would be spent by the department.<sup>24</sup>

3.26 An official informed the committee that the current plan is for the funding to service approximately 10 to 12 community cabinet meetings during 2008–09. Although PM&C could not predict the costs for each meeting because the nature of the meeting will vary, an official stated that the cost for a recent community cabinet meeting in Penrith was \$36 445 which did not include staffing payments.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Charter letters***

3.27 Opposition Senators continued on from the committee's previous Estimates hearings and examined the details surrounding the proposed charter letters to be drawn up between ministers and the Prime Minister.<sup>26</sup>

3.28 Senator Faulkner informed the committee that he did not receive a charter letter from the Prime Minister, but instead participated in a formal, minuted discussion in relation to the benchmarks that were set for his performance. He also stated that he was not aware of whether other ministers had received charter letters or not, and resolved to take this question on notice.<sup>27</sup>

3.29 Senator Faulkner outlined that it is the Prime Minister's intention to meet again with each minister in July 2008 to undergo the exercise of conducting formal meetings, instead of producing charter letters.<sup>28</sup> Opposition Senators question Senator Faulkner about the specific details contained in the minute of the meetings and the dates and duration of meeting held between ministers and the Prime Minister.

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23 Senator the Hon John Faulkner, Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 66.

24 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 75.

25 Dr Wendy Southern, First Assistant Secretary, Government Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 75.

26 *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, pp 85–90 and 120–124; *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 79–85 and 95.

27 Senator the Hon John Faulkner, Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 82.

28 Senator the Hon John Faulkner, Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 83.

3.30 On the issue of whether Senator Faulkner would be prepared to table his minutes before the committee he took the question on notice.<sup>29</sup>

### **2020 Summit**

3.31 Opposition Senators questioned PM&C about the department's involvement in the recent 2020 Summit. Particularly, the details discussed included the costs associated with the event and the allocation of contracting services.<sup>30</sup>

3.32 A PM&C official informed the committee that the estimated cost of the organisation and delivery of the 2020 Summit will reach approximately \$2.6 million which is the amount that was budgeted for the event.<sup>31</sup>

3.33 The committee heard evidence that a \$56 000 media management contract was awarded to CMAX Communications, which is run by the wife of the Defence Minister's media adviser. Officials told the committee that CMAX was recommended to the department by a ministerial staffer in the Prime Minister's Office, and that the company was appointed by direct tender apparently due to time constraints.<sup>32</sup>

3.34 Officials told the committee that they were unaware of the personal relationship between the company and a ministerial adviser and that they had appointed the company on the basis that it was listed on the government's communications contracting panel.<sup>33</sup>

3.35 After receiving a briefing on the matter from PM&C, Senator Faulkner contacted the Minister for Defence, recommending that he (the Minister for Defence) refer the matter to the government staffing committee so that that committee could talk directly to the Defence Minister's staffer in order to understand the relationship.<sup>34</sup>

3.36 Opposition Senators also raised the issue that CMAX had changed its name on 22 April several days before the story broke in the *Age* on 25 April. Two weeks later the company sought to de-register.<sup>35</sup>

3.37 Senator Faulkner acknowledged that mistakes were made in awarding the contract to CMAX and that the government would learn from them.<sup>36</sup> An official also

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29 Senator the Hon John Faulkner, Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 84.

30 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 97–113.

31 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 97 and 99–100.

32 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 102–104.

33 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 103.

34 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 106.

35 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 109–110.

36 Senator the Hon John Faulkner, Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 111–112.

agreed that it had not completed the appropriate due diligence processes in appointing CMAX.<sup>37</sup>

3.38 Opposition Senators also asked a series of questions on the planning and organisational arrangements regarding the 2020 Summit. The committee was told that the former Deputy Secretary responsible for the 2020 Summit, Dr Morautu, was no longer with the department and that there were no other officials that could answer questions on the subject. In many instances senators were forced to accept that questions were taken on notice because no officials could respond to the committee's questions.<sup>38</sup>

3.39 Other matters of interest that were examined by the committee include:

- the administration of the honours system;<sup>39</sup>
- the government's knowledge and views concerning the rendition of Mr Mamdouh Habib;<sup>40</sup>
- the establishment of the COAG Unit and COAG Budget measures;<sup>41</sup>
- the government's decision to increase the Medicare levy surcharge threshold;<sup>42</sup>
- what procedures PM&C will follow to investigate the alleged leak of Cabinet and other documents;<sup>43</sup>
- standards of Ministerial ethics;<sup>44</sup>
- the *Lobbying Code of Conduct*;<sup>45</sup> and
- Freedom of Information requests and conclusive certificates.<sup>46</sup>

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37 Mr Mike Mrdak, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, p. 112.

38 *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, pp 99–102.

39 *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, p. 67.

40 *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, pp 91–95.

41 *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, pp 110–115.

42 *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, pp 115–120; *Estimates Hansard*, 26 May 2008, pp 131–132.

43 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 3–5.

44 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 76–79 and 86.

45 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 92.

46 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, pp 93–96.



## The Australian National Audit Office

### *The effect of the efficiency dividend*

3.40 The committee examined what affect the Government's two per cent efficiency dividend would have on the Australian National Audit Office's budget and delivery of the 'performance audit program'.

3.41 The Auditor-General informed the committee that the two per cent efficiency dividend will equate to a loss in the agency's budget of approximately \$1.26 million over the 2008–09 financial year. In relation to the delivery of the ANAO's performance audit program the Auditor-General stated the number of performance audits will have to decrease to cope with the reduction in budgeted expenditure.<sup>47</sup>

3.42 The Auditor-General stated that this was not in the best interests of fulfilling the ANAO's mandate to improve the performance of Federal public sector administrative practices:

I have said elsewhere that I did not think the reduction was in the interests of the parliament, given the nature of our work being a stimulus for better administration. In fact the chair of the Public Accounts and Audit Committee made the point in parliament:

The Audit Office is the front line in ensuring government accountability and probity...

She went on to say:

...the modest budget of the Audit Office should be seen as a cost-effective mechanism for curbing waste and excess, and identifying areas for better administration on behalf of the parliament and the Australian community.

I happen to agree with the JCPAA on this matter and I would have preferred the budget process to be able to be more discriminating.<sup>48</sup>

For a further discussion on the efficiency dividend see Chapter 1 of this report.

### Office of the Privacy Commissioner

3.43 The Office of the Privacy Commissioner appeared before the committee for the first time since the December 2007 change to the Administrative Arrangements Order, which brought the office under the committee's oversight.

3.44 Senator Mason questioned the Privacy Commissioner about recent reports in the media relating to allegations that the Australian Anti-Doping Authority provided

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47 Mr Ian McPhee, Auditor-General, Australian National Audit Office, *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2008, p. 3.

48 Mr Ian McPhee, Auditor-General, Australian National Audit Office, *Estimates Hansard*, 28 May 2008, p. 4.

Medicare with a list of athlete's names, and had asked Medicare to provide a list of potential drug cheats.<sup>49</sup>

3.45 The Privacy Commissioner stated that because no individual had made a complaint to the commission about the allegations that she had decided to use the agency's legislative power to open an 'own motion investigation'.<sup>50</sup>

3.46 The Privacy Commissioner also informed the committee that this investigation has not yet been completed. Senator Mason asked the Privacy Commissioner to outline what law government agencies are required to follow when undertaking the data matching of people's personal details. The Privacy Commissioner informed the committee that:

Essentially there are two guidelines. One set of guidelines is mandatory and one set of guidelines is voluntary. The first set which is mandatory, is those that relate to a data-matching act, which covers the way the tax office, Centrelink and the Department of Veterans' Affairs match information using the tax file number. There are also voluntary guidelines that have been issued by a previous Privacy Commissioner in 1998 that cover the way other agencies data match, including the way, say, [the] ATO would also data match when they do not use the tax file number.<sup>51</sup>

### **Department of Climate Change**

3.47 The following issues raised with the Department of Climate Change (Climate Change) include:

- the emissions trading scheme;
- Professor Ross Garnaut's employment contract; and
- whole-of-government approach to climate change;

### ***Responsibilities of the Department of Climate Change***

3.48 The Minister for Climate Change, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, informed the committee that the government has allocated \$59 million over the next four years for the establishment of the department.<sup>52</sup> The Minister stated that the major areas that her department will focus on include:

...to lead the development of a whole-of-government strategic framework for international and domestic climate change policy, international climate change negotiations, coordinating the development and implementation of various climate change policies on the domestic front, and primarily leading

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49 *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 114.

50 Ms Karen Curtis, Privacy Commissioner, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 114.

51 Ms Karen Curtis, Privacy Commissioner, *Estimates Hansard*, 27 May 2008, p. 114.

52 Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Climate Change and Water, *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 93.

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development and implementation of the emissions trading scheme. We are also charged with implementing the expanded Renewable Energy Target, implementing legislation of greenhouse emissions and energy consumption reporting, and developing a strategic approach to climate change adaptation...<sup>53</sup>

### ***Emissions trading scheme***

3.49 Senator Wong also told the committee about the timeline and processes involved in implementing the government's 'cap-and-trade' emission trading scheme.<sup>54</sup>

3.50 Senator Johnston, questioned Senator Wong and officials about whether reports were correct that one reason why Professor Garnaut will release a draft report before issuing a final report, is because of a delay in finalising economic modelling. An official stated that Senator Johnston was correct in his assessment. The official elaborated on the reasons why a delay would take place, this includes that the modelling will be jointly undertaken between Treasury and Climate Change.<sup>55</sup>

3.51 Senator Johnston also pursued questions relating to whether Professor Garnaut's green paper (to be released during June or July 2008) will address measures to assist households. Professor Garnaut replied that 'analytically' it will, although such analysis will be dependent on the modelling which will mean that the final August report will include this information in detail.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Professor Garnaut's employment contract***

3.52 Senator Johnston questioned Climate Change officials about the details of Professor Ross Garnaut's employment contract.<sup>57</sup> Senator Johnston raised concerns about the use of a standard form employment agreement for Professor Garnaut's contract, for example he asked why the contract specifies working hours of 36 hours and 45 minutes.<sup>58</sup>

3.53 An official replied to Senator Johnston's question stating that the contract was made in line with the standard hours set out in the collective employment agreement

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53 Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Climate Change and Water, *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 93.

54 Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Climate Change and Water, *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, pp 94–95.

55 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, pp 94–95.

56 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, pp 95–96.

57 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, pp 96–101.

58 Senator David Johnston, *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 96.

for staff working with the Department of Environment. The official also stated that in hindsight it may have been beneficial to have used a specific consultancy agreement.<sup>59</sup>

### ***Whole-of-government approach to Climate Change***

3.54 Australian Green's Senator, Christine Milne questioned Climate Change officials about how the government intends to develop a whole-of-government approach to implementing climate change policy across government departments. In reply an official stated:

In those areas, [the portfolio areas identified by Senator Milne] essentially what we have tried to do is put in place a strategic framework for the government, and then the individual departments are responsible within that for their own areas of development. We have attempted to engage early in the process when departments are thinking about some of the issues, but at this stage I think it is true to say that it is still a work in progress.<sup>60</sup>

3.55 On the question of what influence Climate Change currently has over various portfolios an official replied that departmental officials are consulting, and have in some cases developed close working relationships at officer levels.<sup>61</sup>

3.56 Senator Milne also questioned officials about government policies that she believed, if implemented, would be contrary to the need to lower carbon emission. These policies included building roads and freeways under AusLink funding for 2009–14.<sup>62</sup> Senator Wong replied to this line of questioning that:

The government made a range of election commitments, and we intend to honour our commitments to the electorate...In terms of infrastructure, obviously there are a range of issues associated with the impact of climate change that do over time need to be taken into account or integrated into some of our strategic planning around infrastructure...<sup>63</sup>

3.57 Other matters of interest that were discussed relating to Climate Change included:

- the need for Climate Change to take into account a new set of accounting practices to ensure uniform reporting;<sup>64</sup>

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59 Dr Martin Parkinson, Secretary, Department of Climate Change, *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 97.

60 Dr Martin Parkinson, Secretary, Department of Climate Change, *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 104.

61 Dr Martin Parkinson, Secretary, Department of Climate Change, *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 104.

62 Senator Christine Milne, *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 105.

63 Senator the Hon Penny Wong, Minister for Climate Change and Water, *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 105.

64 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, pp 97–98.

- which industries will be included in the emissions trading scheme;<sup>65</sup>
- staffing arrangements;<sup>66</sup>
- the Minister for Climate Change and Water's minuted discussions with the Prime Minister relating his expectations;<sup>67</sup> and
- election commitments relating to Climate Change.<sup>68</sup>

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65 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, pp 105–108.

66 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 108.

67 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 108.

68 *Estimates Hansard*, 29 May 2008, p. 109.

