

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio
Department of Climate Change
Budget Estimates Hearing—May 2009

Written question reference: CC8

Outcome/Output: Outcome 1, Output Group 1.1 – Response to climate change

Topic: Stabilisation goal - environmental groups informed of error

Hansard Page: F&PA 20

Question: (Senator Bob Brown)

Senator BOB BROWN—Have any business or environment groups been informed that the three words ‘by mid-century’ were an error? Have any business or environment groups that have welcomed the announcement come back to you and informed you of the error?

Senator Wong—No stakeholder has raised this with me. It may be that this has been discussed with members of the department, and I will take that question on notice to determine if that is the case.

Answer:

One environment group that welcomed the announcement raised the mistaken reference with the Department on Tuesday 5 May 2009, the day after the announcement, noting that the reference to “by mid century” appears in some places in the media release but not in the table of conditions accompanying the media release.

The Department explained that the references in the general text to stabilisation “by mid-century” or “by 2050” were an error, noting that while all or most of the emissions reductions required by advanced countries to achieve stabilisation will need to occur by mid-century, the actual stabilisation outcome will not be achieved until well after this date. The Department also noted that the future assessment of whether the conditions have been achieved would be based on the formal set of conditions, not the accompanying press material.

The Department is not aware of any other businesses or environment groups raising this issue. Departmental officials have raised it in a number of discussions with stakeholders about the target and conditions, and clarified that the references to “by mid-century” or “by 2050” were an error.