

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2009

Department of Finance and Deregulation

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 1, Program 1.2.5

Topic: Deregulation Priorities

Question reference number: F32

Type of Question: Hansard F&PA 89, 27 May 2009

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 July 2009

Number of Pages: 2

Senator Coonan asked:

Senator COONAN—Okay, but that does not tell me what is actually happening. For example, could you take me through each of the areas—and there are 27 of them. This has been going since March, since there was this endorsement of the implementation plan, so we over a year into it. What is happening, for example, with getting nationally consistent OH&S laws?

Senator COONAN—So where is it actually up to? Do you know?

Ms Page—I would prefer to take that on notice because it is quite a complex set of reforms and I would like to refer to the detail of that.

Senator COONAN—What about the issue of product safety?

Ms Page—The product safety one I think I would like to take on notice.

Senator COONAN—Can you explain what is proposed with payroll tax harmonisation?

Ms Page—Again, Senator, I would prefer to take that one on notice, to provide more detailed advice on that one.

Answer:

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)

Work is proceeding on this reform consistent with meeting the overall milestone of achieving uniform national OH&S laws by December 2011. Safe Work Australia was formally established on 1 April 2009 to lead and improve OH&S and workers' compensation arrangements in Australia. Draft proposed legislation is being drafted and will be released for public consultation later in 2009.

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2009

Department of Finance and Deregulation

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Product Safety

This reform is being advanced in tandem with reform of the consumer policy framework. Consistent with agreed milestones, COAG agreed at its meeting on 2 July to an Intergovernmental Agreement for the Australian Consumer Law, which includes agreement to a new national product safety regulatory and enforcement regime.

Payroll Tax Harmonisation

This reform is also on track. Work is proceeding in two stages. All jurisdictions except Western Australia have implemented Stage 1 of payroll tax harmonisation, which will harmonise payroll tax administration agreed under the States Payroll Consistency Project. Western Australia will be implementing Stage 1 reforms shortly. Several jurisdictions have now completed Stage 2 reforms, which will harmonise definitions and terms in payroll tax legislation not covered in Stage 1, and work is in train in the remaining jurisdictions.

A public report addressing these three items, and the progress of all other reforms being oversighted by the Business Regulation and Competition Working Group, was released by COAG following its meeting on 2 July.