

**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 Hearing 25-29 May 2009**

**Question: PM21**

**Outcome 1, Output 5**

**Topic: Community Cabinet - Staffing**

**Type of Question: Hansard, F&PA 25 May p87**

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

**Number of pages: 1**

**Senator RONALDSON- How many staff have been allocated from within existing resources to date?**

**Mr Mrdak-I would have to check; I think it is a relatively small team at community cabinet at this stage. We tend to draw on staff right across the department to support us on community cabinet. The total secretariat for community cabinet, which is within our cabinet division, is relatively small. As meetings are approaching, we tend to second staff from other areas of the department to assist. I will get that information for you, Senator. If you do not mind, I will check that, but I think at this stage it would be of the order of half a dozen people.**

**Answer:** In early January 2008, a Community Cabinet Secretariat was established in Cabinet Division with funding equivalent to eight staff to develop and implement the Community Cabinet program. This initial staffing was to manage the logistical planning and delivery of the meetings.

The Community Cabinet program has developed over time in response to ministers' needs. The Community Cabinet Secretariat now provides significant meeting-specific briefing material and a coordinated reporting regime on issues and actions. It also reports regularly to Government, providing a cumulative and comparative analysis of the various communities' concerns.

In light of this additional tasking, a resourcing shortfall became apparent prior to the 2008-09 Budget. This was addressed in the short term by funding for a further five positions being made available from within the department's existing resources taking the total to 13. These positions were anticipated as a partial advance on the resourcing sought in the context of the 2008-09 Budget.