

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: PM47

Outcome 1, Output 1

Topic: Location of COAG Reform Council in Sydney

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Senator RYAN-I have some questions about the COAG reform council and staffing, which we briefly covered yesterday. If I heard you correctly, Mr Mrdak, you said that the COAG reform council was based in Sydney.

Mr Mrdak-That is correct.

Senator RYAN-Who chose Sydney?

Mr Mrdak-I would have to check. I think that it came out of a COAG decision when the COAG reform council was formed in 2007.

Answer: The COAG Reform Council at its meeting on 30 May 2007 requested the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (the Department) to investigate possible locations in Canberra and Sydney to house its Secretariat.

A search was conducted and a Sydney property was deemed to be the most suitable and represented at that time the best value for money. A Canberra property was ranked third on the list of preferred properties following the search. During the course of settling on the Sydney property the Department was advised that the owner required it for another purpose.

This necessitated a further investigation process as the properties ranked second and third in the earlier investigation were no longer available.

As no suitable property was available in Canberra, after the caretaker period, a lease was entered into by the Department to secure space, commencing on 1 December 2007 for a period of three years, for the COAG Reform Council Secretariat on Level 8 at 6 O'Connell Street, Sydney.