

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Supplementary Budget Estimates 17-20 October 2011

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Outcome/Program:** 1.1.4 Support Services for Government Operations

**Topic:** Asian century white paper - consultation between departments

**Senator:** Senator Ryan

**Question reference number:** 19

**Type of Question:** F&PA, p 74, 17 October

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 2 December 2011

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

Senator RYAN: I would also appreciate as well as the nature of the consultation and the dates of the consultation whether that was simply discussions between officers over the phone, whether it constituted meetings of officials from both departments and the degree of involvement of people from the Office of the Prime Minister and the office of the foreign minister.

Dr de Brouwer: I will take on notice consultations from the department with other departments.

[...]

Senator RYAN: I would appreciate some clarity around dates. Consultation could be you picking up the phone to your counterpart in DFAT the day before the announcement was made or consultation could be a series of weekly meetings between officials with expertise in this area between the two departments in the month leading up to it. I think you would appreciate that both would constitute consultation. It is a magic word.

Dr de Brouwer: I do not have the details of the times, so we will come back through questions on notice.

**Answer:**

Senior officers of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) discussed the possible Australia in the Asian Century White Paper with senior officers of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Department of the Treasury (the Treasury).

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In particular, Dr Ian Watt discussed the possible Australian in the Asian Century White Paper with the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Dennis Richardson on 26 September 2011.

Dr Ian Watt discussed the possibility of a White Paper with the Secretary to the Treasury, Dr Martin Parkinson on the 5 September 2011 at Dr Parkinson's instigation.

Dr de Brouwer discussed the possible White Paper with the Secretary of the Treasury, Dr Martin Parkinson on the 20 September and 26 September 2011.

Regarding the establishment of the announcement of the White Paper and the institutional arrangements of the Task Force, there was general officer level discussion between PM&C, DFAT and the Treasury in the days leading up to the Prime Minister's announcement of the White Paper on 28 September 2011.