

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: 1.1.1 Domestic Policy

Topic: COAG - Indigenous affairs

Senator: Senator Payne

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Question:

Senator PAYNE: Just in relation to the Indigenous affairs aspect of these questions- and I expect you might need to take this on notice-can you outline for the committee the role that Indigenous affairs will play specifically in each council group or fora under the new structure, including all the work that is transferred from MCATSIA?

Ms Cross: We will take that on notice. We will certainly be able to refer you to the relevant parts of the terms of reference for councils and any information and the work plans once they are signed off.

Answer:

Role of Indigenous Affairs in Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Councils

The Terms of Reference for Standing Councils identify issues of a cross-cutting nature that the Council will ensure are considered in its work. Indigenous disadvantage or participation is identified as a cross-cutting issue for every Standing Council except Federal Financial Relations.

The Terms of Reference for several Standing Councils and Select Councils identify specific priority issues or reform tasks related to reducing Indigenous disadvantage. The Standing Council on Health has a priority issue of closing the gap in health outcomes; the Standing Council on Law and Justice will progress measures to reduce Indigenous disadvantage, and the Select Council on Women's Issues will develop a national approach to promote the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in governance and decision-making for communities and organisations.

Standing Councils will also report on the contribution they have made towards meeting the Closing the Gap targets in their annual reports to COAG.

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Work transferred from Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSI)

The MCATSI Indigenous Population Project Phase 2 work was transferred to the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination in September 2010. This project looks at socio-economic determinants for measuring service populations, and at developing an approach to the measurement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing.

Development of a National Framework for Leadership and Governance for administrators in Indigenous communities and organisations is being undertaken in the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The COAG Working Group on Indigenous Reform (WGIR) noted progress on the framework at its meeting of 7 November 2011. The final document is expected to be completed by the end of 2011 and tabled at the next WGIR meeting.