

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government

Supplementary Budget Estimates 17-20 October 2011

Question: 11

Topic: Northern Australia Indigenous Sustainable Development Forum

Asked By: Senator MACDONALD

Type of Question: Hansard F&PA 112

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

Number of pages: 2

Ms Fleming: It was a discussion between the four jurisdictions—Queensland, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and the Commonwealth. Ministers discussed the chair and deputy chair.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: So they were selected by the ministers attending the forum.

Ms Fleming: Correct.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Were applications called for? Do we know if others were considered?

Ms Fleming: There were discussions at the standing committee and then ministers made a decision collectively.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Do you know if ministers were offered a list to choose from, or were there just two recommendations given by the standing committee?

Ms Fleming: Can I take that on notice?

Answer:

In establishing the Indigenous Forum on Sustainable Economic Development, the requisite skills and experience for the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair were outlined for the Standing Committee of Senior Officials, which supports the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum, in an out-of-session paper.

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These requirements included:

- Highly respected across northern Australia with demonstrated leadership skills. Able to provide high level leadership and gravitas to the Indigenous Experts Forum;
- Demonstrated ability to identify and engage key stakeholders in the business of the Indigenous Experts Forum;
- A depth of understanding of policy issues relevant to sustainable economic development in northern Australia;
- Excellent communication skills. Ability to lead and facilitate genuinely inclusive discussions at Forum meetings; and
- Extensive experience dealing with senior Ministers and officials. Able to efficiently and accurately communicate key messages from Forum meetings to a wide range of audiences.

On the basis of these requirements, the northern jurisdictions were invited to nominate suitable candidates to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee considered three candidates. From this list, the Committee recommended Pat Dodson for the position of Chair and Peter Yu for Deputy Chair to the Ministerial Forum. These recommendations were considered and accepted by Ministers.