

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 15-18 October 2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.1 Domestic Policy

Topic: EPBC standards - compliance

Senator: Ms Waters

Question reference number: 14

Type of Question: FPA, P82

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 30 November 2012

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator WATERS: Okay. My interest in that is in compliance with the standards, as I am sure you would know, including community participation in not just the formation but also, primarily, the enforcement of those standards. So I will not question you about that, but I will just put you on notice that that is the sort of aspect that I am interested in. If you are able to provide me with any further details on those points on notice, that would be much appreciated.

Mr Burnett: Yes.

Answer:

The Commonwealth's draft standards (as set out in the draft *Framework of Standards for Accreditation*) have been developed to inform the Commonwealth's position in bilateral negotiations with states and territories.

In addition to environment and system standards, the *Framework of Standards* outlines the Commonwealth's expectations in relation to assurance. To maintain community confidence in the new arrangements and ensure the ongoing protection of matters of national environmental significance, the Commonwealth will seek commitment to a range of assurance mechanisms (e.g. review, reporting, audit, information exchange and processes to manage significant breaches) as part of any future bilateral agreement.

The Australian community will have two key opportunities to participate in the development of the new arrangements with States and Territories. The draft standards were released for public comment on 2 November 2012, prior to being finalised; any draft bilateral agreements will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days prior to being completed, as required under section 49A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.