

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2010

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 1, Program 1.1

Topic: Finance advice on the Home Insulation Program

Question reference number: F5a & F5b

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F5a:

Senator RYAN—Did the department express concerns about what I might broadly describe as supply side issues in that it would lead to a significant growth in this industry in a very short period of time? Did the department express concerns about the viability of that being performed or undertaken in a safe or responsible manner?

Mr Tune—No, I don't think so.

Senator RYAN—If the department says otherwise, I would appreciate notice of that.

Mr Tune—I will just check. I will have to take that on notice. It is not clear. We would need to go back and have a look at the advice. Then there is another issue about that being advice that we provided to government on policy and whether I can talk about that is another matter.

Senator RYAN—I appreciate that and obviously cabinet papers, but advice to minister is not a catch-all.

Mr Tune—The advice we would have given would have been in various cabinet documents.

Senator RYAN—Sure. And if that is the case I am not pushing, but for general advice to ministers other than that, that is not a catch-all assertion.

Senator Sherry—We will take it on notice.

F5b:

Senator RYAN—What were the problems you identified in the management of the program?

Mr Tune—They fed into a report that was done for cabinet so I do not think I can go into that.

Senator RYAN—Every concern the department expressed has subsequently become a cabinet document?

Mr Tune—Can I take that on notice? I will check.

Answer:

As indicated by Mr Tune, the department did not provide advice on safety issues. The department did provide advice on costing, funding and industry capacity issues.