



THE SENATE  
SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE  
REFERENCES COMMITTEE

**Inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**  
**Public Hearing –7 December 2018**  
**Questions Taken on Notice**  
**Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet**

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**1 HANSARD, pp. 14–15**

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**CHAIR:** Prime Minister and Cabinet, we heard from the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, and we hear frequently from the minister, Minister Scullion, that there's been tremendous success in terms of employment of Indigenous businesses and Indigenous people. Do you have any stats on that? What does that actually look like? Unfortunately, I've only heard it the context across the chamber, which is obviously not the best place to get the facts. Minister Scullion is very strong on the fact that this is a good area of public policy that's delivering real outcomes.

**Mr McDonald:** We could take that on notice and provide you with some information if that's what you'd like. I presume you want it broken down by the SDGs?

**CHAIR:** He does quote quite large figures about the amount of contracts won by Indigenous businesses. That'd be really useful, as would the number of people actually employed. They're always referenced back to a starting point, which is usually when we were in government or something like that, which is understandable in the chamber. It would be good to see, because we know from Defence and we heard from the National Congress that Defence and their Indigenous procurement outcomes are going really well. I'd like to see from Prime Minister and Cabinet if there's a set of figures we could see that they are improving employment outcomes.

**Mr McDonald:** Unfortunately, we didn't bring any of our Indigenous affairs colleagues with us today, but I can certainly take it on notice and get you something as soon as possible.

**CHAIR:** If it's a good story, we should be telling it.

**RESPONSE:**

**Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth**

*Indigenous Employment*

In 2016, the national Indigenous participation rate was 57.1 per cent, compared with 77 per cent for non-Indigenous Australians. During the same period, the Indigenous employment rate was 46.6 per cent, compared with 71.8 per cent for non-Indigenous Australians and the unemployment rate for Indigenous people of working age was 18.4 per cent, around 2.7 times the non-Indigenous unemployment rate (6.8 per cent).

### *Indigenous Business*

The number of Indigenous Australians going into business is growing rapidly – with a 30 per cent jump in the number of Indigenous Australians reporting that they were in business in 2016 compared to 2011, compared to a 1 per cent increase for non-Indigenous Australians. Supply Nation-registered Indigenous businesses generated around \$1.15 billion in revenue in 2014-15 across a range of sectors from construction to professional, scientific and technical services. Their revenues have been growing at an annual average rate of 12.5 per cent.

### *Indigenous Procurement*

In the first two years since the Indigenous Procurement Program began, from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2017, 4,880 contracts were awarded to 956 Indigenous-owned businesses with a total value of \$594 million.

Source: Closing The Gap Report: Prime Minister's Report, 2018



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**Senator MOORE:** This is a supplementary question in terms of that. Did the teachers, to the best of your knowledge, and this is just to throw it out there, approach the departments to get some help in preparing that knowledge? In another school with which we have experience they did, because the teachers were trying to get knowledge about the SDGs. They actually went to DFAT; it was great. Staff from DFAT were supporting them. It'd be interesting to know where the teachers got their information.

**Mr McDonald:** I can take that on notice and get back to you.

**RESPONSE:**

Mr McDonald has approached the school and asked them to pass on their response.



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**Senator MOORE:** I had some difficulty trying to find a COAG statement about the SDGs, and I think we may have asked about that. Do you know whether there has been a COAG statement about the SDG agenda? I'll put that on notice.

**Mr Sheppard:** We'll take it on notice. I believe not at this stage, but I will take it on notice.

**RESPONSE:**

There has been no formal COAG statement about the SDG Agenda.



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**Senator MOORE:** That's getting input from all the different departments, so you're getting narratives that reflect all the different departments?

**Mr McDonald:** This came through the IDC, and all agencies were invited to participate in trying to craft this narrative.

**Dr Rogers:** Yes.

**Senator MOORE:** How many accepted the invitation?

**Mr McDonald:** That I don't know.

**Senator MOORE:** Can we get that on notice—and how many didn't accept the invitation.

**Mr McDonald:** I'm not sure there would have been a record kept, because it was sort of an informal discussion, but we can have a look.

**RESPONSE:**

On 10 May 2018, 24 participants representing 12 Departments and agencies (including DFAT and PM&C) took part in a roundtable discussion on an SDGs narrative.



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**Senator MOORE:** And this is absolutely, I promise you, the last question: Thank you very much for providing the list of stakeholders engaged by DFAT—that was very useful. Can you follow up on notice about linkages with local government organisations. We've spoken with a number of local governments and I've spoken with a number of local government organisations, and there's very mixed knowledge of and engagement in the SDG agenda. We talked about the COAG and linking with state governments. Is there any plan for linking in formally with the various local government networks?

**Mr McDonald:** I can say there's not.

**RESPONSE:**

There are currently no plans to establish formal links with local government networks.



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**Senator MOORE:** If I wanted to put a question on notice about Smart Cities, can I give that to either of you.

**Mr McDonald:** That used to be part of our responsibilities; it's no longer, but we can perhaps convey that to—

**Senator MOORE:** A particular issue raised by a few of the submitters has been about the Smart Cities Plan and how SDG agenda 11 is almost word for word in some parts—I just want to know whether there was any awareness and linkage in that process.

**Mr McDonald:** If we can take down that question, we can pass it along to the responsible agency.

**Senator MOORE:** That'd be really useful. Thank you very much.

**RESPONSE:**

The Australian Government's Smart Cities Plan was informed by best practice from around Australia and internationally, including the work of international organisations such as the OECD and United Nations as well as Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11).

At the 2016 Australian Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the former Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation, the Hon Angus Taylor MP, outlined that whilst priorities of the Smart Cities Plan were selected for the Australian context, they align with many of the SDG 11 targets.

Developing sustainable, liveable cities and introducing a more participatory approach to city planning and decision making are shared pillars between Australia's cities policy and SDG 11. The Australian Government is already making a significant contribution toward achievement of SDG 11 through key domestic initiatives such as City Deals, the Smart Cities and Suburbs Program and the National Cities Performance Framework.

In 2018 the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities led the development of a chapter for Australia's Voluntary National Review on progress towards SDG 11