

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Inquiry into the

Treasury Laws Amendment

(Making Sure Every State and Territory Gets Their Fair Share of GST) Bill 2018

2018 - 2019

Division/Agency: Commonwealth-State Relations Division

Topic: When was the decision made to reject the PC's recommendation?

Reference: Spoken

Senator: Chris Ketter

Question:

Senator KETTER: When was the decision made to reject the PC's recommendation?

Mr Atkinson: These reports and considerations are fairly central parts of the cabinet process and we can't go into the nature of those here.

Senator KETTER: I'm not asking for the nature, I'm just asking for the date.

Mr Atkinson: I would have to take that on notice.

[...]

Senator KETTER: Can you tell me the date of that cabinet meeting?

Mr Atkinson: Senator, I already took that on notice.

Answer:

It is a longstanding practice not to disclose information about the operation and business of the Cabinet, as to do so could potentially reveal the deliberations of the Cabinet, which are confidential.

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Division/Agency: Commonwealth-State Relations Division

Topic: Did Treasury provide advice to the Treasurer or the Treasurer's office that would have aided in a decision to reject the PC's recommendation?

Reference: Spoken

Senator: Chris Ketter

Question:

Senator KETTER: All right. Did Treasury provide advice to the Treasurer or the Treasurer's office that would have aided in a decision to reject the PC's recommendation?

Mr Atkinson: In the ordinary course of events, we usually provide advice to the government on all matters going through cabinet process.

Senator KETTER: Can you tell me when that occurred?

Mr Atkinson: I'm sorry, no. I'll take that on notice as well. I'm not aware.

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Division/Agency: Commonwealth-State Relations Division
Topic: Modelling of the different models of GST distribution
Reference: Spoken
Senator: Chris Ketter

Question:

Senator KETTER: But I'm interested in the modelling of the different models of GST distribution. Where did the direction come from to do that work?

Mr Atkinson: I would presume it was from the Treasurer, but I'd have to take that on notice.

Senator KETTER: Can you take that on notice and also take on notice when you received the instruction to conduct that modelling.

Mr Atkinson: Yes.

Senator KETTER: And when was Treasury asked to finish this work? Was there a deadline for when that information was to be provided?

Mr Atkinson: I would presume it was in time for consideration by the cabinet.

Senator KETTER: Can you take on notice as well when it was required to be finalised?

Mr Atkinson: Yes, certainly.

Answer:

The Treasurer requested modelling and analysis of horizontal fiscal equalisation (HFE) reforms from Treasury following the delivery of the Productivity Commission's (PC) final report on its inquiry into HFE to government on 15 May 2018. Treasury provided modelling and analysis to the Treasurer as part of the policy development process, ahead of the release of the interim response.

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Division/Agency: Commonwealth-State Relations Division

Topic: Preferred GST distribution model

Reference: Spoken

Senator: Chris Ketter

Question:

Senator KETTER: Well, when was the decision made, ultimately, to legislate for the preferred GST distribution model?

Mr Atkinson: I'd have to take that on notice. It was some time in the lead-up to the CFFR meeting—which was on what date, Kate?

Ms Phipps: On 1 October. The government announced that it intended to implement the HFE reform via legislation, and on that day the draft bill was provided to state and territory treasurers. Then there was a discussion about the bill on 3 October 2018 with the Commonwealth Treasurer and all the state and territory treasurers.

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Division/Agency: Commonwealth-State Relations Division

Topic: Legislated guarantee within the bill

Reference: Spoken

Senator: Chris Ketter

Question:

Senator KETTER: Who made the decision that there would be a legislated guarantee within the bill?

Mr Atkinson: That decision was made as part of the parliamentary discussions on the legislation, or pre-parliamentary.

Senator KETTER: The decision was made on the 16th.

Ms Phipps: The government announced it on the 16th.

Senator KETTER: You've said it was announced on the 16th. Is that what you're saying to me?

Ms Phipps: That's right.

Senator KETTER: My question was: when was the actual decision made?

Mr Atkinson: I'd have to take that on notice.

Senator KETTER: Okay. And who made that decision?

Mr Atkinson: That's a decision of the government.

Senator KETTER: Was there a cabinet meeting to decide that? How was it decided?

Mr Atkinson: I'm not sure. I'd have to take it on notice.

Answer:

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