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19 February 2025

Senator Andrew Bragg
Chair
Senate Economic References Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Bragg,

Thank you for your letter of 4 February.

We have deep respect for the Senate and its Committees.

Accordingly, we have assisted the work of the Senate Economics References Committee over the past year with considerable time and effort, developing two comprehensive major written submissions that run to 52 pages which include robust new modelling and analysis to inform the evidence base on retirement.

We have also provided additional analysis, insights, and materials to the Committee as an addendum to these written submissions.

We were invited to appear at one of the multiple public hearings, which we did enthusiastically. We have subsequently answered 43 additional written questions from the Committee Chair asked in five pieces of correspondence over the last two months.

SMC has given detailed written responses to the questions which have included relevant information and submissions to assist the committee. We have properly and reasonably answered the questions that were asked of us.

In addition to our extensive participation and contributions to this inquiry so far, we look forward to continuing our very constructive engagement as the Committee continues its inquiry into outcomes and experiences in the retirement system.

To that end, we have been working responsively with the Committee Secretariat about our availability for future proposed public hearing dates.

We look forward to continuing to engage constructively with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Misha Schubert
CEO, Super Members Council

THE SENATE

Senate Economics References Committee

4 February 2025

Misha Schubert
Chief Executive Officer
Super Members Council

By email: [redacted]

Dear Ms Schubert

Inquiry into Improving consumer experiences, choice, and outcomes in Australia's retirement system

On behalf of the Senate Economics References Committee, I am writing regarding answers provided by the Super Members' Council to written questions on notice from the committee Chair to SMC in relation to the above inquiry, received on 17 January 2025.

The committee notes that a number of these questions have not been adequately addressed. Responses variously redirect to a website or a previous non-substantive answer, or answers are insubstantial. The committee asks that you address the questions put, with the answer being contained within the response itself which have been listed in the attachment to this letter.

The information requested by the committee is important to the committee's consideration and investigation of the retirement systems inquiry. The committee looks forward to your response to the questions on notice **by COB Wednesday, 19 February 2025**.

If you have any queries, please contact the secretariat by reply email or on the number below.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Senator Andrew Bragg
Chair

Written question on notice	**Answer (or redirection and answer)**
1. How much was Mr Saul Eslake paid for his report ‘Super for Housing’ – will it help solve or exacerbate the housing affordability crisis’?	1. This question was answered in the hearing on 14 November 2024. ----------------------- ***Relevant section of 14 Nov transcript:*** ***CHAIR:*** *How much are you paying him?* ***Ms Schubert:*** *All of our supplier arrangements are commercial-in-confidence.* ***CHAIR:*** *So, you won't provide that information?* ***Ms Schubert:*** *I said our supplier arrangements are commercial-in-confidence, but the work stands for itself. Again, just to reiterate what Mr Eslake found, he found that demand-side policies push up house prices across six—* ***CHAIR:*** *I understand that you want to give lengthy answers on things that I haven't asked about, but all I'm trying to get to the bottom of is this. You commissioned a report for public advocacy, did you not?* ***Ms Schubert:*** *We commissioned one of the nation's foremost independent economists to conduct his own rigorous, independent analysis of demand-side policies into the housing supply situation in Australia.* ***CHAIR:*** *I'm asking how much you paid.* ***Ms Schubert:*** *And I'm saying all of our supplier arrangements are commercial-in-confidence.* ***CHAIR:*** *You won't provide that information to the Senate?* ***Ms Schubert:*** *I'm saying to you that we commissioned Mr Eslake to undertake a piece of work. That was a really important contribution to the public policy discussion. It's not for us to articulate the services or fee fixtures for other organisations as well.* ***CHAIR:*** *I don't think on this occasion the Senate is going to force you to disclose this, but I would say to you that I'm not sure it's the best look. Anyway, that is your judgement to make. We thank you very much for your time today.*

3. Did Mr Eslake's report model first home buyers accessing super in conjunction with an increased supply of 500,000 homes?	3. Mr Eslake's report sets out his analysis. It is publicly available here: https://smcaustralia.com/report-saul-eslake-super-for-housing-willexacerbate- the-affordability-crisis/
4. Did Mr Eslake's report model first home buyers accessing super in conjunction with any increased housing supply?	4. See Q3.
5. Did Mr Eslake's report model the impact on housing affordability for first home buyers with no increased housing supply?	5. See Q3.
6. How many members does SMC have?	6. A full list of SMC member funds is on the SMC website.
7. How much are your membership fees currently?	7. Membership fees vary by fund.
8. What is the total budget of your organisation?	8. This question was answered in the hearing on 14 November 2024. ----------------------- ***Relevant section of 14 Nov transcript:*** ***CHAIR:*** *What is the budget total? What is the total?* ***Ms Schubert:*** *I think we've disclosed that to the committee before. It's a $10 million operating budget, which is absolutely commensurate with many other peak bodies and organisations across the system. That ensures that for an average cost of less than $1 per member per year there's a high-quality policy advocacy service.*
9. How much has SMC spent on advertising from 2019-2024?	9. SMC only commenced operations on 1 October 2023. In August 2024, SMC announced a public awareness initiative to help strengthen Australians' understanding of how super works. Details of this education initiative are on the SMC website.
15. Was the op-ed discussed with Mr Swan or Cbus prior to its publication? If so, what were these discussions?	15. Publishing opinion pieces is an activity that all major industry and policy advocacy bodies undertake regularly. The opinion piece sets out the views of the SMC Chair.
16. Does Ms Sherry think that the equal representation model, which requires people from specific fields and industries, allows boards to get the right mix of experienced directors to govern these very large organisations?	16. The Chair's views on this topic are set out in detail in the opinion piece – available on the SMC website.

17. If so, how has the Cbus Board failed its members so egregiously since Mr Swan became Chair? Please explain with regards to the delays to over 10,000 death and disability claims.	17. Questions on any individual fund operations should be directed to the relevant fund.