

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2011-12 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 7

Question No: 292

Topic: Homelands - Housing

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

On 8 August 2011, the Australian Government's Cabinet in Confidence "Strategic Review of Indigenous Expenditure [February 2010]" was released under an FOI request. In the review at page 215 it states "... in the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, it was agreed that the Commonwealth, the States and the Northern Territory governments would work to clarify roles and responsibilities and funding for municipal services and infrastructure and essential services in remote areas. This report would include a time frame for implementation of new arrangements and for these arrangements to be in place from 1 July 2012." What progress has the Australian Government made in clarifying roles and funding for remote municipal services, indigenous housing and other infrastructure and essential services?

Answer:

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, the Commonwealth committed to undertake a Municipal and Essential Services (MES) Audit to assess the level and need for municipal and essential services in Indigenous remote communities. The results of the MES Audit were to be used to inform negotiations on future roles and responsibilities with respect to the funding and delivery of these services.

The physical auditing process has been completed, and community and jurisdictional level reports prepared. A National Report was considered by the Standing Council on Community, Housing and Disability Services on 30 March 2012, which will inform negotiations on future arrangements.

In addition, the Commonwealth has been working in conjunction with Infrastructure Australia, State and the NT Governments, and other stakeholders to develop a National Strategic Policy Framework and funding model for remote Indigenous infrastructure planning and development. This work will also inform COAG consideration of revised arrangements.