

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 19
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome:
Programme: Policy Analysis and Implementation Division
Topic: 2015 Intergenerational Report
Hansard Page: 97-98
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Question Type: Spoken

Senator Urquhart asked:

Senator URQUHART: Did they? That's very good, at this late hour of the night. I guess my question is, was it largely ignored, considering the lack of environmental and climate focus of the IGR?

Dr de Brouwer: I think it is very hard for us to answer that. The normal way documents are done within government is that comments go back and forth between departments, and it is really the originating department's responsibility for that material. We provided ongoing comments and had good interaction with Treasury, but it is really up to Treasury.

Senator URQUHART: So you did not get an email back with a gold star or anything like that on it?

Dr de Brouwer: We may have.

Senator URQUHART: You may have? Do you want to take that on notice?

Dr de Brouwer: I think we have answered that one.

Senator Birmingham: I am sure the department gets the public service equivalent of an elephant stamp every time they engage with Treasury.

Senator URQUHART: An elephant stamp! Good, I would like to see the elephant stamp, I do like elephants. Will the department make its contributions public or can it be tabled to the committee?

Dr de Brouwer: We would not normally make that public. That is a document that goes also to cabinet. It is like us showing our input into deliberative material for cabinet. I do not think it is appropriate.

Senator URQUHART: Are you able to—

Senator Birmingham: These are drafting documents, essentially.

Senator URQUHART: I understand that. But are you able to maybe assist the committee with providing some feedback on the type of content that you may have—

Dr de Brouwer: I feel very reluctant to do that. It would be the same as showing as deliberative material goes to cabinet what our views have been in that process. We do not normally show that. That is part of the internal and healthy discussion within government about the drafting of material. That material would have also gone to the cabinet in some process. If you require it, I will take it on notice, but I would rather not take it on notice if you will accept that answer.

Senator URQUHART: I would like you to take it on notice if you can.

Dr de Brouwer: I will take it on notice.

Answer:

The Treasury is the lead agency for the Intergenerational Report. The Department of the Environment commented on material drafted by the Treasury. Disclosure of that material would disclose consultation or deliberation that has taken place in the course of the Treasury preparing the Report. As such, any decision to release material on the Intergenerational Report is a decision for the Treasury.