

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Treasury Portfolio
Additional Estimates
2015 - 2016

Department/Agency: Treasury

Question: AET 27

Topic: Tax White Paper Personnel in Treasurer's Office

Reference: Hansard page no. 24 - 10 February 2016

Senator: Wong, Penny

Question:

Senator WONG: In terms of personnel on the tax white paper, Mr Heferen has been in charge of it—was there a unit in the Treasurer's office?

Mr Fraser: Yes—

Senator Cormann: There is a unit in the—

Senator WONG: Really!

Senator Cormann: This is actually a matter for government and you are now asking for something that is based in the context of a ministerial office.

Senator WONG: They are paid by the public.

Senator Cormann: There is a unit that supports the Treasurer in relation to tax reform and is, of course, focussed on the government's ambition to make sure that our tax system is as growth friendly as it possibly can be.

Senator WONG: Mr Fraser, are these MOP staffers or public servants?

Mr Fraser: The terminology, Peter can you assist please?

Senator WONG: Are they staff employed by the minister or are they Treasury staff seconded in?

Senator Cormann: I think we have actually gone through this in some detail—

Mr Robinson: My understanding is that they are not Treasury staff.

Senator WONG: They are not Treasury staff?

Mr Robinson: They are not Treasury staff.

Senator Cormann: If you want detail again on their status, I am happy to take that on notice.

Senator WONG: Are they former Treasury staff?

Mr Fraser: The two principals are not.

Mr Robinson: Not that I am aware of.

Senator WONG: How many people are we talking about?

Mr Fraser: Mr Heferen is better placed on this. We have two principals, there may be one or two others.

Senator WONG: Is this in addition to the normal allocation of ministerial staff?

Senator Cormann: I think you are now going into questions that are not really questions for the Department of the Treasury, because questions in relation to staff of members of parliament, including personal staff of ministers, are part of Outcome 3 in the Finance portfolio.

Senator WONG: Are they former Treasury officials or not?

Senator Cormann: That is—

Senator WONG: Hang on. Can I ask a question? It is actually called the Tax White Paper Unit in the papers tabled at Finance estimates. So are there ex-Treasury or current Treasury officials employed in the Tax White Paper Unit?

Mr Fraser: The two principals, to my knowledge, have never been part of Treasury.

Senator WONG: Right.

Mr Fraser: I hesitated because I am not sure as to the status of one of the juniors.

Senator Cormann: We will take it on notice and give you a proper answer.

Senator WONG: Thank you. Are they still employed in the Tax White Paper Unit?

Mr Fraser: As far as I know, yes.

Answer:

As this is a question relating to staff of the Government, it should be referred to the Special Minister of State.