

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

2016 - 2017

Division/Agency: Structural Reform Group

Question No: 309

Topic: Gas Measures Implementation Taskforce

Reference: Written

Senator: Ketter, Chris

Question:

Referring to the announcement by the Prime Minister: “Measures Agreed for Cheaper, More Reliable Gas” on 15 March 2017:

1. Did Treasury provide advice to the Treasurer or the Government in relation to the measures outlined in the Prime Minister’s announcement?
2. If so, when?
3. When was Treasury first advised of the details in the Prime Minister’s announcement of 15 March 2017?
4. Did the Treasury provide briefing to the Treasurer ahead of the meeting of 15 March 2017 with the gas industry? If so, when? When did Treasury commence drafting the documents making up the Treasurer’s briefing?
5. Will Treasury be in contact with State and Territory Governments in relation to revisiting restrictions on gas exploration and development? If so, when will this occur? How will this occur? If not, why not?
6. How many times will the taskforce set up to implement the outcomes in the 15 March 2017 announcement meet?
7. When is the first meeting of this taskforce?
8. Who is providing the secretariat to that taskforce?
9. What resources is Treasury providing as part of this taskforce?
10. Which Treasury staff are involved in this taskforce?

Answer:

Treasury provides a range of policy advice to the Treasurer on a range of issues related to energy markets broadly, and the gas market specifically. Treasury did not provide specific advice in the context of the Prime Minister’s announcement “Measures Agreed for Cheaper, More Reliable Gas” on 15 March 2017. The Department of the Environment and Energy and the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science have portfolio responsibility at the Commonwealth level for issues related to gas exploration restrictions.

Treasury will appropriately consult relevant agencies, at Commonwealth and State level, on any work it prepares for Government consideration. The Taskforce, to which Treasury is contributing staff resources drawn largely from the Structural Reform Group, met for the first time on 20 March 2017 and continues to meet regularly and will continue to do so as required.