

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Treasury Portfolio
Budget Estimates 2014
3 June to 5 June 2014

Department/ Agency: Productivity Commission

Question: BET 25

Topic: Automotive Transformation Scheme

Reference: Hansard pg 54-55, 4 June 2014

Senator: Ludwig

Question:

Senator XENOPHON: How about I put it in neutral terms to Mr Harris. The budget made some changes to the Automotive Transformation Scheme, I think, and there is no dispute about that.

Mr Harris: That is correct, Senator.

Senator XENOPHON: So as a result of those changes you are saying that, because the commission provided its report to the government on 31 March, you have no discretion or ability to provide a supplementary report without fresh terms of reference from the Treasurer.

Mr Harris: That is the normal practice.

Senator XENOPHON: We live in unusual times, abnormal times. In terms of that being the normal practice, does the commission have any scope to send a note or a supplementary report to the government saying, 'Given what has occurred in the budget we would like to amend, alter or add to our report provided to you on 31 March 2014'?

Mr Harris: I do not think so.

Senator XENOPHON: Can you take that on notice as to whether you do have those powers to do so?

Mr Harris: I could examine the matter for you and advise you further.

Answer:

25. Section 11 of the *Productivity Commission Act 1998* deals with reference of matters to the Commission for inquiry. Specifically, s11(3) provides that 'the Minister may withdraw or amend the reference at any time before the Minister has received the report on the inquiry from the Commission'. The Commission does not have the power to amend or re-issue a reference.