

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

**Department/ Agency:** Treasury

**Question:** BET 42

**Topic:** Distributional analyses of budget measures

**Reference:** Hansard - pg 119-120, 4 June 2014

**Senator:** Wong

**Question:**

42. Senator WONG: The distributional analyses in the 2013-14 budget—and you would know this, Mr Ray, but I will just take you to it for completeness—included single people on three different percentages of the average wage, sole parents, single income couples, dual income couples, single income couples with children, dual income couples with children, single pensioners and pensioner couples. Did you undertake any distributional analyses of budget measures or a subset of budget measures for that range of family type?

Mr Ray: I think that is going where we have been on a number of things. Clearly, that sort of analysis has not been published—

Senator WONG: No, but you are likely to get a Senate committee asking for it, so maybe we should start talking about whether you have in fact done it.

Senator Cormann: I would just like to make the obvious point that, whether it is through FOI or through the established processes of the Senate, documents and advice on this part of cabinet deliberations are obviously exempt from the sort of proposition that you have just put forward. Let me also make the very important point that the government made judgements—and takes responsibility for the judgements we have made—about what was the most appropriate information to provide in the context of this budget. Our judgement is that the most appropriate information in all of the circumstances is to ensure that everybody is very clear on how much they are getting in government payments, how much they are getting in welfare support payments for various income brackets and various family types and how much various families or individuals have to pay in income tax, depending on their particular income bracket. That is the information we have published in great detail in the relevant pages—I think it is from page 22 onwards—of this particular budget related publication which, as Mr Ray said, has been put together with the support of the Treasury. You might disagree with the judgements that we made, but they are the judgements that we have made and we take full responsibility for them. Your government made a similar judgement when you put together the 2008-09 budget—and I have got here the budget overview of 13 May 2008, exactly six years before our first budget was delivered.

Senator WONG: Mr Ray, could you answer my question?

Senator Cormann: I have answered it on behalf of the government.

Senator WONG: I am repeating it because—

Senator Cormann: We will take it on notice.

Mr Ray: I will take it on notice.

Senator WONG: On what basis, Mr Ray?

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

Senator Cormann: We have got to consider to what extent we can assist you in relation to information that is part of the deliberative processes of government.

Senator WONG: I have not actually even asked the information.

Senator Cormann: You did ask for it.

Senator WONG: No, I am asking whether you have done it. I had not got to that point, Matthias.

Senator Cormann: Mr Ray did actually say that they did do distributional analysis. I think we had gone past that.

Senator WONG: Can we just confirm that, Mr Ray?

Senator Cormann: He pointed to where it is reflected in the overview.

Senator WONG: No, in addition to this. It would be much easier—and we could have all gone home earlier—if you would just stop interrupting.

Senator Cormann: I was never hopeful that we could go home early tonight.

Senator WONG: I was—because I did not have that much. But we are definitely here until 11, everybody, because Senator Cormann insists on giving the same speech over and over again and interrupting.

Senator Cormann: I am just making sure that the position is well understood.

Senator WONG: Can I just go back—

CHAIR: Senator Wong, you have got a minute.

Senator WONG: This is a very high-level analysis that does not go through the sorts of family types that I described to you in detail. I ask again: did you do a distributional analysis, for this sort of range of family income type, of budget measures or a subset of measures? I am not asking what it showed; I am asking whether you did it. It is a perfectly legitimate question, and we can have a debate on the floor of the Senate about it if you want. But the Treasury has an obligation to provide appropriate information to this Senate committee, and I would like an answer.

Senator Cormann: And the answer that Mr Ray has already provided is that no such information was published. As to the extent to which we may or may not be able to assist you beyond that, I am taking that on notice on behalf the government.

Senator WONG: I have not asked for the document to be published.

Senator Cormann: I have taken on notice whether we are able to assist you beyond what I have said.

Senator WONG: I am going to ask the clerk for some advice tonight. We can have a discussion tonight about the response from you and Mr Ray. I am not asking—

Senator Cormann: And the clerk will tell you what she would have told you in the past: we are entitled to take questions on notice.

Senator WONG: I want to put this on the record because it is going to be important later. I am going to ask for some advice tonight because—

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

Senator Cormann: We are quite entitled to take questions on notice.

Senator WONG: Let me finish! Chair, do I have the call?

CHAIR: No. It is now a quarter past nine. I understand; you have said you have got to take advice. We will come back here at 9.30.

Senator WONG: I am going to put it on the record to give the department the opportunity to consider its position. Thank you.

CHAIR: And you have now done that.

Senator WONG: I have not done it! I keep being interrupted. The minister is talking over me. I cannot even talk. He is talking over me.

CHAIR: Hansard is still recording, and it is now on the record. It is a quarter past nine.

Senator WONG: I have not finished what I was saying.

CHAIR: You can continue with what you are saying at 9.30.

Senator WONG: I think Mr Ray should be given the opportunity to understand that I am not asking for the content, I am asking whether it was done.

CHAIR: The committee is now suspended. We will return at 9.30 with the continuation of the Fiscal Group.

Proceedings suspended from 21:15 to 21:29

CHAIR: Mr Ray, is there something you wish to add?

Mr Ray: Before the break, we were talking about distributional work that we may or may not have done. In an attempt to help the committee, I thought we should say that we did a range of distributional analysis as part of the policy advising that we did on the budget, some of which, as we pointed out, led to some material being published in the budget. Other distributional analysis that we did was part of the policy advising process. We are happy to take on notice whether or not we can provide details of what that work may or may not have been.

Senator WONG: The decision as to what of that was included or not included in the budget overview was obviously a government decision?

Mr Ray: It was a government decision, yes.

Senator WONG: Did that work indicate the impact of budget measures or a subset of budget measures on different family types and income levels?

Senator Cormann: They have taken that bit on notice.

**Answer:**

42. Treasury provided policy advice to the Government on a range of issues through the preparation of the Budget, including distributional analysis. As this would be advice to Government we are unable to provide the details beyond what was published in the Budget papers.