

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Budget Estimates

2014 - 2015

**Department/Agency: Treasury**

**Question: BET 4**

**Topic: Members of Parliament (MOPs) Act**

**Reference: Hansard page no. 34 - 01 June 2015**

**Senator: Dastyari, Sam**

**Question:**

4. Senator DASTYARI: Mr Fraser, has the government instructed Treasury to drop any work on all of this? How does it work if they are doing it? Why aren't you doing it? Why isn't it being run out of Treasury? Normally these things would be run out of Treasury, wouldn't they? Why are they doing it themselves?

Mr Fraser: The preparation for the tax white paper is totally unencumbered, and we have been operating the group out of Treasury. The group attached to the Treasurer's office is something about which, frankly, the Treasurer's office would be better placed to answer.

Senator DASTYARI: Does the minister then, on behalf of the Treasurer's office—

Senator Cormann: As Mr Fraser has indicated, the tax white paper secretariat is part of Treasury. There is a unit supporting the responsibilities of the Treasurer which is part of the normal support for members of parliament, including ministers, under the structure of the MOP(S) Act.

Senator DASTYARI: Let us just be clear. I just want to be clear about what is going on. I assume this falls under Revenue Group. Mr Heferen will be here tomorrow, I think, or on Wednesday.

Senator Cormann: That is right.

Senator DASTYARI: There is a unit within his team that does the tax white paper, and then there is a unit in the Treasurer's office which has five people, including one with a role of chief of staff—

Senator Cormann: Role of chief of staff?

Senator DASTYARI: There is someone who has the title of chief of staff with responsibility for the tax white paper—whichever is leading the unit. That is the official title. This all came out in other estimates—sorry, Minister; you were not there, so I do not want to be unfair to you.

Senator Cormann: Because it is not my part of the Finance portfolio. That is why.

Senator DASTYARI: Sure, but there was a minister at the table. I am just saying. I am putting things to you that you were not there for, so I am trying to do you justice.

There is a unit of five people. I do not understand what the unit of five people, Minister, is doing in the Treasurer's office if it is being run out of—who is in charge of this?

Senator Cormann: What we can help you with here in the Treasury estimates is in relation to questions on the tax white paper secretariat, because that is a unit that operates out of Treasury. The most appropriate senior officer to assist you with these matters is Mr Heferen, who Mr Lonsdale promoted to senator earlier!

Senator DASTYARI: But I am asking you about the government.

Senator Cormann: In relation to the group of people supporting the Treasurer under

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the MOP(S) Act, those are questions that are appropriately asked in the section of the Finance estimates that deals with MOP(S) Act employees.

Senator DASTYARI: But their exact words were that, in terms of what they do, I should be asking you in Treasury estimates. We are going round in circles. The point is that I am not worried about how they are employed under the MOP(S) Act. I am asking you as the representative of the Treasurer at the table. If you want to take it on notice, you can take it on notice.

Senator Cormann: They provide advice to the Treasurer supporting, obviously, his leadership of the tax white paper review process. To the extent that I can add specific information to that, I will take the question on notice.

#### **Answer:**

This question was answered during the Economics Legislation Committee on Tuesday 2 June 2015. The response can be read on pages 60 – 61 from Hansard (Proof Committee Hansard, Senate Economics Legislation Committee Estimates, Tuesday 2 June 2015 Canberra).