

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Question: SBT 40

Topic: Productivity Commission Inquiries

Hansard Page: 22, 20 November 2013

Senator PRATT asked:

Senator PRATT: You have said that you are focused on getting through work, but I did pick up some level of concern in what you said about the workload of the commission. How many inquiries did the Productivity Commission have underway before 7 September?

Mr Harris: Currently, we have major project development approvals, which is just about to be completed.

Senator PRATT: These were ones before 7 September?

Mr Harris: That one definitely was, because it is just about to be completed. The safeguards inquiry into canned tomatoes and canned fruit will be completed in December but was commenced before the change of government. Geographic labour mobility commenced under the previous government as well. That is about halfway through and a draft report is coming shortly on that. Access to justice also started under the previous government. That it is at a relatively early stage. Passenger motor vehicles is post—

Senator PRATT: I am going to ask you about the ones post. Is that it for pre 7 September?

Mr Quinlivan: There are three others. There is an inquiry into the national access regime, which has been completed and submitted to the government. There is an inquiry on mineral and energy exploration, the report from which has also been submitted. Then there was the inquiry on small business engagement, which the commission has released. That is the complete set.

Senator PRATT: How many new references has the new government given the Productivity Commission?

Mr Harris: So far, we have passenger motor vehicles, infrastructure and child care.

Senator PRATT: How many more references are you expecting, given the government's election commitments?

Mr Harris: At least two more.

Senator PRATT: And what are they?

Mr Harris: One in relation to Tasmania and shipping services, which will be done jointly with the ACCC, and one relating to industrial relations.

Senator PRATT: Will there be one on the car industry as well?

Mr Harris: Passenger motor vehicles.

Senator PRATT: Could you please take on notice the resourcing and staff requirements for each of those inquiries.

Mr Harris: Sure.

Answer:

40. Since September 7 the Productivity Commission has received four new references:
- an inquiry into Australia's automotive manufacturing industry (reference received 30 October 2013, final report due 31 March 2014);

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- an inquiry into public infrastructure (reference received 13 November 2013, final report due May 2014);
- an inquiry into childcare and early childhood learning (reference received 22 November, final report due 31 October 2014); and
- an inquiry into Tasmanian shipping and freight (reference received 29 November 2013, final report due 7 March 2014).

Information on the staff involved in these inquiries is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 Staffing of public inquiries and other commissioned projects commenced since 7 September 2013

<i>Government-commissioned project</i>	<i>Staffing</i>
Australia's automotive manufacturing industry	1 SES, 2 APS4, 6 APS3, 3 APS2, 1 APS1
Public Infrastructure	2 SES, 6 APS4, 4 APS3, 3 APS2, 2 APS1
Childcare and early childhood learning	1 SES, 3 APS4, 4 APS3, 3 APS2, 1 APS1
Tasmanian shipping and freight	1 SES, 3 APS4, 3 APS3, 2 APS2, 1 APS1
Projects yet to commence but committed to by Government	Staffing still to be determined at time of response

These inquiries are ongoing and, where available, final resourcing costs will be reported in the Commission's 2013-14 Annual Report.