

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

20-21 November 2013

Question: SBT 90-97

Topic: Reviews

Written: 25 November 2013

Senator LUDWIG asked:

90. Since 7 September 2013, how many new Reviews have been commenced? Please list them including:
- a. the date they were ordered
 - b. the date they commenced
 - c. the minister responsible
 - d. the department responsible
 - e. the nature of the review
 - f. their terms of reference
 - g. the scope of the review
 - h. Whom is conducting the review
 - i. the number of officers, and their classification level, involved in conducting the review
 - j. the expected report date
 - k. If the report will be tabled in parliament or made public
91. For any review commenced or ordered since 7 September 2013, have any external people, companies or contractors being engaged to assist or conduct the review?
- a. If so, please list them, including their name and/or trading name/s and any known alias or other trading names
 - b. If so, please list their managing director and the board of directors or equivalent
 - c. If yes, for each what are the costs associated with their involvement, broken down to each cost item
 - d. If yes, for each, what is the nature of their involvement
 - e. If yes, for each, are they on the lobbyist register, provide details.
 - f. If yes, for each, what contact has the Minister or their office had with them
 - g. If yes, for each, who selected them
 - h. If yes, for each, did the minister or their office have any involvement in selecting them,
 - i. If yes, please detail what involvement it was
 - ii. If yes, did they see or provided input to a short list
 - iii. If yes, on what dates did this involvement occur
 - iv. If yes, did this involve any verbal discussions with the department
 - v. If yes, on what dates did this involvement occur
92. Since 7 September 2013, what reviews are on-going? Please list them.
93. Since 7 September 2013, have any reviews been stopped, paused or ceased? Please list them.
94. Since Budget estimates, what reviews have concluded? Please list them.

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

20-21 November 2013

95. Since 7 September 2013, how many reviews have been provided to Government? Please list them and the date they were provided.
96. When will the Government be responding to the respective reviews that have been completed?
97. What reviews are planned?
- When will each planned review be commenced?
 - When will each of these reviews be concluded?
 - When will government respond to each review?
 - Will the government release each review?
 - If so, when?
 - If not, why not?

Answer:

90.

1. Financial System Inquiry

a. This inquiry was announced as an election commitment.

b.-h. Refer to the Treasurer's media release of 20 December 2013

<http://jbh.ministers.treasury.gov.au/media-release/037-2013/>

i. There are 11 Treasury officers ranging from APS 6 to SES Band 3.

J. The expected report date is November 2014.

k. The report will be tabled and/or made public.

2. Small Business Advisory Services program review

The Small Business Advisory Services (SBAS) program was first funded in 2008 and was reviewed in 2011. In the 2012 Budget the program was extended with on-going funding.

a. New program funding for the SBAS program in 2011, agreed to an evaluation every two years.

b. SBAS program evaluation commenced 13 January 2014.

c. Minister for Small Business the Hon Bruce Billson, MP.

d. The Treasury.

e. In order to conduct the review a number of approaches will be used, including:

- Collection and analysis of data from within The Treasury and AusIndustry (Department of Industry), particularly Periodical Reports provided by the service providers;
- Desktop research and Literature review;
- Assessment of program logic, including review of assumptions;
- Engagement of an independent consultant to conduct a survey to gauge the views of end users (small business participants); and

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

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Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

20-21 November 2013

- Consultations with stakeholders, including the service provider, industry representatives, commonwealth agencies and state and territory governments.
 - f. Currently being drafted.
 - g. The review will examine the performance of the SBAS program against the criteria of appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, integration, performance assessment and strategic policy alignment.
 - h. Treasury and independent consultant. The independent consultant has not been engaged at this time.
 - i. One EL1 and one Graduate.
 - j. October 2014.
 - k. No.

91.

1. Financial System Inquiry

- a. The Treasurer appointed Mr David Murray AO (Chair), Professor Kevin Davis, Mr Craig Dunn, Ms Carolyn Hewson AO; and Dr Brian McNamee AO.
- b. Not applicable.
- c. The panel members will be paid \$1000 a day, and the Chair will be paid \$1500 a day.
- d. Not applicable.
- e. No.
- f. The Treasurer has contacted Committee members to discuss their appointment.
- g. The Treasurer.
- h. Yes, the Treasurer had discussions with the Department in the period from the Government's election to the formal appointment of members on 19 December 2013.

92.

- Review on removing the tax advantages available to multiple entry consolidated groups
- The Financial Industry Supervisory Levy Methodology Review

93. Nil.

94. Nil.

95. Commonwealth Consumer Affairs Advisory Council study into *Credit card surcharges and non-transparent transaction fees: A study*, was provided to Government on 17 October 2013.

96. Commonwealth Consumer Affairs Advisory Council study into *Credit card surcharges and non-transparent transaction fees: A study* was released by the Minister for Small Business on 7 November 2013. The Government is not required to formally respond to this study.

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

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Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

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1. The Government is planning a Treasury-led review of the Taxation of Financial Arrangements regime.

Consistent with the Assistant Treasurer's press release of 14 December 2013, the review will consider the design of two outstanding announced but un-enacted Taxation of Financial Arrangement measures. The review will also identify and prioritise measures designed to address any other significant issues that have arisen since the commencement of the Taxation of Financial Arrangements regime.

- a. The TOFA review is expected to commence in the second half of 2014.
- b.-d. This will be determined closer to the time of the review.

2. The Government is planning a Treasury-led review of the consolidation regime.

The review will assess and prioritise outstanding recommendations from the Board of Taxation's Post-Implementation Reviews of the consolidation regime, and identify and address any additional significant consolidation issues.

- a. The consolidation review is expected to commence in 2015.
- b.-d. This will be determined closer to the time of the review.

3.

- a. The Government's root and branch review of competition laws and policy will commence shortly and be completed within 12 months.
- b.-d. Decisions regarding release of the final report and a Government response are matters for the Government to consider in due course.