

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

2015 - 2016

Department/Agency: Treasury

Question: SBT 131 -136

Topic: Tax Whitepaper

Reference: written - 30 October 2015

Senator: Ludwig, Joe

Question:

Tax Whitepaper

Herald (Online: <http://www.smh.com.au/action/printArticle?id=1000716502>)

It was reported on 23 September, 2015 in the Sydney Morning Herald that one of Prime Minister Turnbull's first acts in the job was to secretly suspend all work on the Tax White Paper that was being developed by Treasury under the previous Prime Minister, Tony Abbott and Treasurer, Joe Hockey.

131. When did the Prime Minister tell Treasury that work on the White Paper should be suspended?
132. How did the Prime Minister relay this information to the department?
 - a. If it was relayed in a written form, could you please provide a copy of this document?
 - b. If it was in a non-written form, can you please detail? Please include who the Prime Minister passed this request on to?
133. Did the Prime Minister consult with anyone before deciding to suspend work on the White Paper? If yes, please provide a list of these people or their position within the department and the dates they were consulted.
 - a. Did the Prime Minister discuss the suspension of the Tax White Paper with Joe Hockey before he directed the department to suspend work? If yes, when?
 - b. Did the Prime Minister discuss the suspension of the Tax White Paper with Scott Morrison before he directed the department to suspend work? If yes, when?
134. How much money had Treasury spent producing the document up to the point it was suspended?
 - a. How many Treasury staff were working on this project?
 - b. Could you provide the amount that they would have been paid in wages over this period?
 - c. Did the department pay for external consultancy with regard to the white paper? If yes, please provide a list of consultants, the date they were engaged and the amount spent on the consultation.
 - d. Were any contracts in place with any external firms for any type of work on this project that had to be cancelled after it was suspended? If yes, please provide a list of the firms and the amount that was paid to end the contract.
 - e. Were any contracts in place with any external firms for any type of work on this project that remain in place? If yes, please provide a list of the firms and the amount that has been paid to them. Please also include the reason the contract has not been cancelled and what work they have performed since the project was suspended.
 - f. Please provide a list of any other costs not relating to staffing or consultancies.
135. How many submissions had been received relating to this white paper?

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- a. How many total pages would be contained in these documents?
 - b. Are their estimates of how much money had been invested by the private sector into these submissions? If yes, please provide the figures.
136. The article quotes a senior department executive who says they were told that a “reset on tax reform was taking place”.
- a. Is a reset on tax reform taking place?
 - b. Are there new terms of reference for a new white paper? If yes, please provide a copy. If no, when can we expect them?
 - c. What changes are taking place on tax reform?
 - d. When can we expect a new White Paper on tax reform?
 - e. Has work on the Turnbull vision for a tax reform white paper begun?
 - f. What work has been done towards the new white paper?
 - g. Will existing submissions be considered?
 - h. Has former Treasurer, Peter Costello been consulted about the new tax white paper? If yes, by who and on what dates?

Answer:

131 -136. The premise upon which these questions are based is incorrect. At no stage was Treasury issued with an instruction to suspend work on the Tax White