

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2010-2011

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Question: PM36

Topic: Australian Crisis Coordination Committee

Asked By: Senator Trood

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 15 April 2011

Number of pages: 3

During a Press Conference on 2 February 2011, the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, made reference on two occasions to the Australian Crisis Coordination Committee. Is this a new Committee or was the Prime Minister referring to either the Australian Government Crisis Committee (AGCC) or the National Crisis Committee (NCC)? If so, which committee was she referring to?

- a. Who are the members of these committees?**
- b. What role and function did they perform during the Queensland and Victorian floods, Cyclone Yasi and the Western Australian bushfires?**

Answer

The Prime Minister was referring to the Australian Government Crisis Committee (AGCC) in her comments during a Press Conference on 2 February 2011.

The AGCC is a coordination body comprising senior officials from relevant Australian Government agencies. It is ordinarily chaired by the Deputy National Security Adviser and includes representation from core Australian Government agencies involved in crisis management and response as well as representatives and subject matter experts drawn from other relevant agencies. Representation at AGCC meetings varies depending on the nature of the crisis and the expertise required.

The National Crisis Committee (NCC) is a coordination body involving senior Commonwealth and State and Territory officials. The NCC allows for national coordination in response to a crisis, particularly where existing coordination

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2010-2011

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

mechanisms may be insufficient. Membership of the NCC includes the AGCC members plus senior representation from the First Ministers' departments and the relevant police and emergency services agencies in each jurisdiction

Agencies represented at AGCC meetings during the floods and Cyclone Yasi crises included, among others: the Attorney-General's Department; Bureau of Meteorology; Australian Federal Police; Centrelink; and the Departments of Finance and Deregulation, Defence, Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, Health and Ageing; Resources, Energy and Tourism, and Infrastructure and Transport.

The role and functioning of the AGCC varies depending on the nature of a particular crisis. During the Queensland and Victoria floods and Cyclone Yasi the AGCC:

- discussed and coordinated advice to the Prime Minister and other Ministers as a basis for the management of crisis response and recovery arrangements;
- scoped and developed options for responding to each crisis;
- supported situational awareness amongst Ministers and senior officials, including through the sharing of information amongst all relevant departments and agencies;
- ensured consistent whole of government communications;
- where necessary, established subsidiary groups for the management of specific issues;
- coordinated linkages and engagement with state and territory governments and the private sector; and
- provided a detailed and comprehensive handover to those agencies with responsibility for longer term recovery arising from each crisis;

The AGCC did not meet in relation to the recent West Australian bushfires.

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2010-2011

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

The NCC met on one occasion in relation to the recent Queensland floods.

The role of the NCC is generally to:

- consider options and advice in relation to national level policy, strategy and public messaging for the coordination of assistance to the affected jurisdictions;
- support the sharing of information and situational awareness between jurisdiction(s) – principally affected jurisdiction(s);
- facilitate the sourcing and delivery of support requested by the affected jurisdiction(s);
- consider advice on the prioritisation of limited Commonwealth resources; and
- provide a high level linkage between state/territory and Commonwealth Government coordination mechanisms.