

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 26 May-6 June 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Deregulation

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Question reference number: 222

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 July 2014

Number of pages: 3

Question:

With reference to the answer to question on notice 81 from the Additional Estimates round:

When in 2014 will SES performance agreements be revised to include a link between remuneration and reductions in regulation?

On what date did Mr Tudge write to the Indigenous Advisory Council advising that it would act as the Ministerial Advisory Council on deregulation for PM&C? Can a copy of the letter be provided?

What specific deregulation role has been assigned to the Indigenous Advisory Council?

Does the Indigenous Advisory Council have a whole-of-portfolio deregulation function?

Noting there are two Cabinet Ministers in the PM&C portfolio, how is the assignment of the Indigenous Advisory Council as the Ministerial Advisory Council on deregulation for PM&C consistent with the Coalition policy to “establish Ministerial Advisory Councils for each Cabinet Minister”?

What is the relationship between the Indigenous Advisory Council acting as the Ministerial Advisory Council on deregulation for the PM&C portfolio and the PM&C deregulation unit?

Can the role of the PM&C deregulation unit be outlined?

What is the current staffing profile of the PM&C deregulation unit?

Has a specific regulatory performance target for the Secretary, Dr Watt, been set?

What is the target?

On what date/s did Senator Scullion issue charter letters to chairs and CEOs of regulatory agencies in the portfolio? Can copies of the letters be provided?

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Has the policy to replace mandatory regulatory reporting requirements with random audits been implemented yet?

Has the policy to develop a whole of government risk management framework for Commonwealth regulators been implemented yet?

For how many regulations does PM&C have responsibility?

Answer:

All SES performance agreements across PM&C are required to include red tape reduction provisions.

Parliamentary Secretary Tudge wrote to formally advise the Indigenous Advisory Council of its additional role as a Ministerial Advisory Council on deregulation for Indigenous-specific issues on 18 March 2014. The Chair of the Indigenous Advisory Council has been approached about the release of the letter, and if agreed the letter will be provided. However, in that letter, Parliamentary Secretary Tudge asked the Indigenous Advisory Council, in its role as an additional role as a Ministerial Advisory Council, to:

- Identify potential targets for regulatory reform (for example, areas of inefficient regulation, excessive red tape or unnecessarily high regulatory burden);
- Act as a sounding board for regulatory reform or repeal proposals;
- Provide feedback on the progress of regulatory reform within the Indigenous portfolio; and
- Provide advice on broader policy issues within the Indigenous portfolio.

The PM&C Deregulation Unit provides information and seeks feedback from the Indigenous Advisory Council in its role as a Ministerial Advisory Council on deregulation.

The PM&C Deregulation Unit provides coordination, monitoring and reporting and strategic policy development concerning the regulation agenda and regulatory impact statements for the PM&C portfolio. It works closely with the Office of Deregulation and the Office of Best Practice Regulation, which both have whole-of-government responsibilities.

The PM&C Deregulation Unit is headed by an SES Band 1 officer. Staffing numbers for the unit vary at any one time according to specific workload requirements and at 6 June 2014 comprised eight (8) full time staff.

Letters were sent to portfolio regulators from the Minister for Indigenous Affairs on 9 April 2014.

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The PM&C portfolio is contributing to the Government's deregulation target. The Secretary is responsible for delivering on the target for the overall portfolio.

The policy to replace mandatory reporting with audits is being progressed as part of the development of a regulator performance assessment framework.

The development of a whole-of-government risk management framework for Commonwealth regulators is being progressed as part of the regulator performance assessment framework.

The PM&C portfolio is responsible for 51 pieces of legislation.