

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates – 25–26 February 2009

Question: aet 81

Topic: Statistic Fund Cuts – International Comparison

Hansard Page: E9 (26 February 2009)

Senator ABETZ asked:

Senator ABETZ—Of course, if you had more resources you might be able to address those issues in the manner that Senator Pratt is suggesting. Could I invite you to take on notice whether or not funding to the ABS equivalent in other countries—the US, Canada, New Zealand and the UK and any other country that you might think is comparable or informative—has been cut. Can you also tell us, as a result of the 100- and however- many job losses there were, if you can somehow quantify the expertise or the qualifications of some of the people that you have lost? How easy will it be to recruit that sort of quality of person in the event that the government comes to its senses—not census, Minister, but senses—in relation to providing funding again in the next budget round? And can I say thank you very much and I wish you all the best. Sorry, I have one other on behalf of Senator Bushby. I nearly forgot. There is an article in the *Australian Financial Review* dated 5 September 2008 entitled ‘A tale of two economies: how the ABS gets it wrong’. I was wondering if, on notice, you could possibly give a three- or four-paragraph or a page response to that article from the ABS perspective.

Mr Ewing—I would be happy to do that. We in fact responded to the article and a letter was published in the *AFR*, I think on the following day.

Senator Conroy—We will supply it to you. It is on the public record.

Senator ABETZ—Thank you very much for that. To save me looking it up, would you be so kind as to forward it to the committee. I am sure the letter will do, so we do not need any further detailed response. I was not aware that that had been responded to.

Answer:

Please see attached correspondence.