

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

1 June – 3 June 2010

Question: BET 269

Topic: Number of reports finished

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Eggleston asked:

- a) How many reports has the Productivity Commission started and finished in the financial year 2009/10? What were they on?
- b) How many reports were commissioned in the financial year 2009/10 and are not yet completed? What are they on?
- c) How many reports were completed in the financial year 2009/10, but commissioned in previous years? What were they on?
- d) How many recommendations out of all reports completed in financial year 2009/10 have been taken on by the Government, as a number and proportion of all recommendations made?

Answer:

- a) In 2009-10, the Commission commenced and completed the commissioned research study on Market Mechanisms for Recovering Water in the Murray Darling Basin.
- b) Nine reports in total. In the financial year 2009-10 the Commission has received 5 new Government-commissioned research studies that it is yet to complete, on:
 - Bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements;
 - Education and Training Workforce;
 - Annual Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business — Business and Consumer Services;
 - Performance Benchmarking of Australian Business Regulation: Planning, Zoning and Development Assessments; and
 - Impacts and Benefits of COAG Reforms

In the same period the Commission started 4 new inquiries, on:

- Wheat Marketing;
- Caring for Older Australians;
- Disability Care and Support; and
- Rural Research and Development Corporations.

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c) Nine reports in total.

The Commission completed 6 reports on Government-commissioned research studies that commenced in the previous year, on:

- Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books;
- Annual Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business — Social and Economic Infrastructure Services;
- Public and Private Hospitals;
- Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector;
- Performance Benchmarking of Australian and New Zealand Business Regulation: Food Safety; and
- Performance Benchmarking of Australian Business Regulation: Occupational Health and Safety.

It also completed 3 reports on inquiries that commenced in the previous year, on:

- Australia's Anti-dumping and Countervailing System;
- Gambling; and
- Executive Remuneration.

d) Across the nine inquiry and study reports that the Commission produced in 2009/10, there were 178 recommendations made.

These are broken down by report as follows:

Completed Commission Reviews - Commissioned Studies	Recommendations	Government response
Books	3	Not accepted
Annual Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business – Social and Economic Infrastructure Services	42	Yes
Performance Benchmarking of Australian Business Regulation: Food Safety	0	Not applicable
Performance Benchmarking of Australian Business Regulation: OHS	0	Not applicable
Review of the Contribution of the Not-For-Profit Sector	39	Awaited
Performance of Public and Private Hospital Systems	0	Not applicable
MDB Water	9	Awaited
	93	

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Completed Commission Reviews - Inquiries	Recommendations	Government response
Anti-dumping	20	Awaited
Executive Remuneration	17	Yes
Gambling	48	Awaited
	85	

There have been detailed Government responses to two of these Commission reports (Annual Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business – Social and Economic Infrastructure Services; and Executive Remuneration) and these have provided acceptance or in-principle acceptance to most of the recommendations in these reports. Across these two responses, approximately 42 recommendations out of 59 have been accepted or accepted in-principle, 5 recommendations were rejected, and a further 12 recommendations were noted or left open.

The Government rejected three recommendations made in a report on parallel import restrictions on books.

Of the remaining six reports, three did not contain recommendations. This leaves four reports for which a response is awaited, and these reports together contained 116 recommendations.

The Commission reports in greater detail on government responses to its recommendations within its Annual Report. This reporting looks at government responses to Commission recommendations across the various levels of government, given that not all recommendations made are for the Australian Government alone to make decisions on. Given that government decisions on Commission reports can be spread across time and levels of government, and not take place via a single consolidated (recommendation by recommendation) response, this approach is effective in summarising in a qualitative way the full details of any response.