

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Estimates 22-23 October 2008

Question: sbt 86

Topic: Terms of Reference for the Gambling Inquiry

Hansard Page: E27

Senator XENOPHON asked:

Senator XENOPHON —Thank you. I have a final question for the minister. Minister, I am just trying to understand in terms of the process of the Productivity Commission's terms of reference for the gambling inquiry, the differences in those terms of reference between 1999 and 2008. If you could take on notice the representations I have made. I sent a letter to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs putting in my two bob's worth, as did other groups. Could I get details of the representations made by various stakeholders—industry, welfare and non-government organisations—that led to the formulation of these particular terms of reference?

Senator Sherry —I will have to take it on notice.

Senator XENOPHON —Yes, I understand that, thank you.

Answer:

At its 3 July 2008 meeting COAG asked the Treasurer to arrange for the Productivity Commission to update its 1999 inquiry into problem gambling (Australia's Gambling Industries). The terms of reference, developed by Commonwealth and State and Territory officials from relevant departments, was considered by COAG at this meeting.

The update to the 1999 Productivity Commission inquiry into problem gambling provides an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of gambling policies, including the harm minimisation measures implemented by the States and Territories since the 1999 Inquiry.

The Government formally consulted with State and Territory Governments through the Ministerial Council on Gambling in developing the Terms of Reference.

On 20 October 2008 the Assistant Treasurer and the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs announced the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry and the proposed commencement date of 24 November.

The Productivity Commission is an independent advisory body and follows a widely transparent and consultative process for undertaking public inquiries. As such, Treasury considers that there is scope for the representations made by Senator Xenophon to be raised with the Productivity Commission as part of this consultative

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process – noting that any issues raised would need to be considered within the scope of the finalised terms of reference.