

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

19 – 20 October 2011

Question No: 109

Topic: Monash University carbon tax modelling

Hansard Page: Thursday 20 October 2011, Page 40

Senator Cormann asked:

Senator CORMANN: The Productivity Commission, in relation to some work on the national reform agenda, also had a contract with Monash University and that contract—pre-2007—required the possibility of public release of all of the relevant information. You are now saying that your contract does not allow public release of that information. If Monash University is comfortable about the MMRF model information to be released, is it at the insistence of Treasury and or the government that the information is not being released in relation to the carbon tax modelling or is it at the insistence of Monash University? Who is insisting that the information not be made publicly available?

Ms Quinn: My recollection is I took this question on notice at another committee. I unfortunately do not have that answer with me, so I am happy to take it on notice again and provide you with a relevant reference.

Senator CORMANN: I ask you to bear in mind too that the Senate will be required to deal with this legislation from 31 October onwards, so it would be helpful within the scope of what is possible if we then do not have to wait for three months.

Senator Wong: But, Senator, you do not care. You have already told us what you are going to do.

Ms Quinn: We will take it on notice.

Answer:

The Treasury engaged the Monash University's Centre of Policy Studies (CoPS) to undertake modifications of the MMRF model for the *Australia's low pollution future: the economics of climate change mitigation* report and to provide expert technical advice for the *Strong growth, low pollution: modelling a carbon price* report. In neither of those contracts did the Treasury acquire the right to publish the MMRF model.

The Productivity Commission also engages CoPS from time to time to provide contract services relating to the development of the MMRF model and database to make them better suited to meeting particular Commission needs. Contract details vary between studies. The particular contract for the development of the benchmark model that was developed for, and released as part of, the study into the Potential Benefits of the National Reform Agenda required that the final model, database and model documentation be made publicly available on the CoPS web site after the completion of the project. This requirement was included in the contract at the Productivity Commission's request.