

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Finance and Administration

February Additional Estimates Hearings 2003-04 – 17 February 2004

Question: F22

Outcome 1 – Sustainable Government Finances, Output 1.1 - Budget

Topic: The Minister for Finance and Administration's release of costings for a proposal to provide paid maternity leave.

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Senator Jacinta Collins asked:

Was there a particular reason why the Minister released these costings prior to the task force's considerations?

Answer:

The costings released by the Minister were related to the proposed paid maternity leave scheme developed by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). Given the issue was a matter of public interest the Minister released costings to assist in the public debate on the proposal. HREOC released a draft paper on paid maternity leave in April 2002 entitled '*Valuing Parenthood: Options for Paid Maternity Leave - Interim Paper 2002*'. The Minister released costings for the proposed paid maternity leave in September 2002. HREOC's final paper entitled '*A Time to Value: Proposal for a national scheme of paid maternity leave*' was released in December 2002.

The Work and Family task force was established to consider issues relating to work and family balance. The HREOC proposal was a separate issue and was not developed by the task force.

Date: 8 April 2003
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