

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearings 2005-2006, 13 February 2006

Question: PM 67

Outcome 1, Output 2.1

Topic: Health Task Force (the Podger Review)

Direct on Notice:

Senator Evans asked:

- 1. When was the Health Task Force formally established?**

Answer:

The Health Task Force was announced by the Prime Minister on 22 October 2004.

- 2. Please provide a copy of the terms of reference for the Task Force?**

Answer:

The Task Force was not a public inquiry. The Task Force examined the operation of the Australian health system to:

- ensure optimum efficiency and effectiveness of health service delivery for all Australians, across the primary, acute, rehabilitative and aged care sectors and their interfaces;
- ensure best use of funding that all jurisdictions put into health and improved accountability and transparency of health funding; and
- identify barriers to seamless service delivery for patients and recommend options to address them.

- 3. Please provide a description of the issues examined by the Task Force?**

Answer:

Please see answer to question 2.

- 4. Who were the members of the Task Force and who decided on the membership?**

Answer:

The Task Force was chaired by Mr Andrew Podger AO. In addition, it comprised:

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- Two SES officers: one seconded from Health and one seconded from Treasury;
- Two Executive Level officers: one seconded from Health and one seconded from PM&C; and
- Two APS-level staff: one seconded from Treasury and one from the Australian Public Service Commission.

Each contributing department decided on its representation on the Task Force.

5. Please provide a list of individuals and organisations consulted

Answer:

The Task Force did not undertake a formal consultation programme.

6. When did the Task Force formally complete its work?

Answer:

The Task Force operated until 18 March 2005.

7. When did the Task Force provide its final report to the Department?

Answer:

The Task Force provided its report to PM&C on 17 March 2005.

8. When did the Task Force provide its final report to the Prime Minister?

Answer:

The Task Force provided its report to the Prime Minister on 17 March 2005.

9. When did the Task Force provide its final report to the Minister for Health?

Answer:

The Task Force provided its report to the Minister for Health and Ageing on 17 March 2005.

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- 10. Has the Task Force provided its final report to anyone else? If so indicate who?**

Answer:

The Task Force provided its report to:

- the Treasurer;
- the Minister for Family and Community Services;
- the Minister for Finance and Administration's Office;
- the Treasury; and
- the Department of Health and Ageing.

A precis of the Task Force's report was also circulated to all Cabinet ministers, with the report being available to them.

- 11. Can a copy of the final report please be provided? If not why not?**

Answer:

The final report of the Task Force cannot be provided, as it constituted policy advice to assist with government decision making, and has not been publicly released.

- 12. Can a list of the recommendations of the final report please be provided? If not why not?**

Answer:

Please see answer to question 11.

- 13. What Departmental resources were allocated to the Task Force, including staff, administrative support, accommodation, etc?**

Answer:

PM&C seconded one Executive Level officer to the Task Force and funded an Executive Assistant for Mr Podger. Accommodation for the Task Force was provided within PM&C. In addition, the Task Force was provided with administrative support, including computers and stationery. Provision was made for these expenses in the funding appropriated for the Task Force (please see question 15 below).

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- 14. Were officers from other Departments seconded onto the Task Force? If so, list the Departments which provided officers?**

Answer:

Please see answer to question 4.

- 15. What was the total funding allocated to the Task Force?**

Answer:

Funding of \$405,000 was appropriated for the Task Force to cover its expenses in 2004-05.

- 16. What was the total cost of the Task Force?**

Answer:

The total cost of the Task Force was \$366,808.

- 17. Has the Government formally responded to the final report of the Task Force? If so can a copy of that response please be provided?**

Answer:

The Task Force report was an input to government decision making and ongoing policy consideration. No formal response has been prepared.

- 18. If the Government has not responded, when will the Government respond?**

Answer:

Please see answer to question 17.

- 19. Who is responsible for responding on the Government's behalf to the Task Force's recommendations? The Minister for Health?**

Answer:

Please see answer to question 17.