

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio
Department of Climate Change
Additional Budget Estimates Hearing—February 2009

Written question reference: CC4

Outcome/Output: Response to climate change

Topic: Emissions Trading Scheme

Hansard Page: F&PA 125

Question: (Senator Abetz)

Senator ABETZ—Is the department already fully staffed in preparation for the introduction of the ETS in 2010 or do we envisage employing more staff over the coming year and a half? If so, how many? You can take that on notice.

Dr Parkinson—I am happy to take that on notice. I will give you the details then. In short, we are still in the process of building up a regulator which will be spun out from the department.

Senator ABETZ—Could you indicate, on notice, the number of jobs.

Answer:

The Department is building toward the full staff complement needed for the introduction of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS). The Department has close to fully staffed the ongoing policy function that will remain with the Department, including responsibilities for completing policy, legislation and regulations. These areas of the Emissions Trading Division in the Department currently involve 48 staff. This will be around the required staffing level until the end of 2009-10. Other policy functions also support the introduction of the CPRS, including measurement and reporting.

More staff will be employed by the Department over the coming months as the Department builds the capacity to implement and operate the new regulatory body, the Australian Climate Change Regulatory Authority (ACCRA). Following passage of the relevant legislation, ACCRA will be spun-off from the Department and will take on responsibility for resourcing the implementation program, which includes amalgamation with two existing regulatory schemes, the National Greenhouse Electricity Reporting Scheme (NGERS) and the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target.

ACCRA will be populated with staff from the Department currently involved in implementing the CPRS and NGERS. Current staff in the Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator will also be incorporated into ACCRA. As at the end of March 2009, the existing staff complement in these areas is 77.

The additional staff numbers required are still being assessed, against the functions proposed for ACCRA in the White Paper and the draft legislation. ACCRA is ultimately likely to require around 300 staff and recruitment strategies are in train. These additional resources will be outlined in the Department's Portfolio Budget Statement.