

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Additional Estimates 8-11 February 2010

Question: PM76a-b

Topic: Election commitments

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 March 2010

Number of pages: 2

- a) **Has the Department identified the status of election commitments within its purview?**
- b) **Which of these commitments have yet to be completed? Why? What are revised expected completion dates for delayed commitments?**

Answer:

- a) Yes.
- b) The Government is progressing work in relation to six election commitments within the purview of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Freedom of information: The Information Commissioner Bill 2009 and the Freedom of Information Amendment (Reform) Bill 2009 have been introduced into Parliament and, subject to Parliamentary processes, the Office of the Information Commissioner is scheduled to commence on 1 July 2010. On 26 February 2010 the Government announced the appointment of Professor John McMillan as the Information Commissioner designate.

Privacy reform: The Government has released its first stage response to the Australian Law Reform Commission's major review of the Privacy Act and is intending to release exposure draft legislation on that stage in 2010.

Referendum on fixed four-year terms: The Government intends to consult in due course with the community and other stakeholders about the form and timing of any referendum on this matter.

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Reforms to appointments and remuneration for departmental

Secretaries: Commitments relating to the appointment and terms and conditions of Secretaries have largely been implemented. Legislation to make the Remuneration Tribunal responsible for determining Secretaries' remuneration is expected to be introduced into the Parliament in 2010. Additional consultation practices have also been introduced to ensure that the best candidates are identified.

Repeal of Electoral Act changes: The Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Political Donations and Other Measures) Bill 2009 has been passed by the House of Representatives and is currently before the Senate. The Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Close of Rolls and Other Measures) Bill 2010 has been passed by the House of Representatives and is currently before the Senate.

Whistleblower protection: The Government has tabled its response to the recommendations of the parliamentary inquiry into whistleblower protection in the Australian Government public sector. The Cabinet Secretary, Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig, has announced that the Government will introduce legislation during this year and is aiming for the legislation to commence on 1 January 2011.