

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 11-14 February 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.1 Domestic Policy

Topic: Green Tape Backflip

Senator: Senator Sinodinos

Question reference number: 8

Type of Question: FPA, P73-74

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 April 2013

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator SINODINOS: There was an article published in the Australian Financial Review on 6 December, "Green tape backflip riles big business", which outlined the Commonwealth decision to reverse the prior policy commitment to take action on green tape – this was on one-stop-shops on environmental approvals, I think – to be negotiated on a bilateral basis with various states. This came as a shock because it seemed to be an outcome of the previous meeting of the Business Advisory Forum that there would be such a green tape reduction. First and foremost: did PM&C receive any representations from environmental interest groups on this matter?

Dr Bacon: Which period are you referring to in terms of when representations might have been received?

Senator SINODINOS: In the period up to 6 December.

Dr Bacon: I think there have been a range of views expressed by different non-government environment organisations and groups about the decision at COAG to pursue approvals bilateral agreements, and many of those views have been published in the media and in other forums.

Dr de Brouwer: There was extensive stakeholder consultation in advance of that process or as part of that process, so those views were incorporated in that as well.

Senator SINODINOS: Did the department brief the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's office about those representations?

Dr Bacon: I cannot recall a specific briefing coming from the department.

Senator SINODINOS: Could you check whether that was the case? I suppose what I am getting at is: what was the decision-making process that led the Prime Minister on

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 11-14 February 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

almost the very day of the COAG meeting to say that she would not be proceeding with that promised green-tape reduction measure?

Dr Bacon: I am happy to take on notice to check whether there were specific briefings provided.

Answer:

The cross-portfolio team based in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet met regularly with stakeholders from both the environment and business sectors. Input from these stakeholders and direct representations to the Prime Minister were taken into account when preparing briefing and throughout discussions with jurisdictions.