

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 24-28 February 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Australia in the Asia Century

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

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Question:

Why did the Secretary dissolve the Australia in the Asia Century Taskforce on 16 September which was two days before the Government was formed? Was the decision informed by discussions with the Prime Minister-elect?

When was the COAG senior officials working group disbanded? Who made this decision? Were other jurisdictions consulted?

What is the status of the Australia in the Asia Century Strategic Advisory Board? If it has been dissolved, who made the decision, why and when?

What is the status of the Australia in the Asia Century Deputy Secretaries Steering Committee? If it has been dissolved, who made the decision, why and when?

What is the status of the APS-wide strategy? If abandoned, who made the decision, why and when?

Answer:

The Taskforce was dissolved as the initial work to establish implementation arrangements had been completed. Ongoing responsibilities and activities for Asian century matters transitioned to relevant line agencies. Discussions between the Secretary and Prime Minister-elect are in-confidence.

There is no requirement to formally disband the COAG Senior Officials' working group. The Australia in the Asian Century work is no longer on the Senior Officials' agenda.

On 24 January 2014 the Prime Minister decided the Australia in the Asian Century Strategic Advisory Board was no longer required. Ministerial advisory councils have been established across government to provide advice on policy matters, including those matters formerly covered by the Board.

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The Australia in the Asia Century Deputy Secretaries Steering Committee has also been dissolved. This flowed from the Prime Minister's decision of 24 January 2014.

The ongoing need for, and role of, an APS-wide strategy is under consideration.