

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SENATE ESTIMATES SESSION

Additional Estimates 24-28 February 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: White Paper – Northern Australia

Topic: White Paper – Northern Australia

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Question reference number: 90

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 Apr 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

With reference to the Northern Australia White Paper:

- (a) How will the Government consult with communities in northern Australia?
- (b) Who was consulted on the draft terms of reference? What role did Mr Entsch and Senator Macdonald play?
- (c) Noting omissions from the terms of reference, how will the White Paper address issues related to (a) climate change (b) sustainability and (c) the natural environment?
- (d) Noting the Prime Minister's commitment to look at tax concessions in northern Australia as part of the White Paper process, what work has been undertaken to date to assess the implications of Section 51(ii) of the Constitution?

Answer:

- (a) The terms of reference indicate that a green paper will be released in the next few months and that the Taskforce will draw on submissions to the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia, take contributions from interested parties and conduct targeted consultations with community, business and academia. The terms of reference also indicate that a new Northern Australia Strategic Partnership (comprising the Prime Minister, the Premiers of Queensland and Western Australia and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory) will be established. The Partnership will be informed by a business, community and Indigenous advisory group drawn from Northern Australia. This information will all inform the development of the White Paper.
- (b) The terms of reference were agreed by the Government.
- (c) The White Paper's terms of reference include consideration of northern Australia's natural advantages, opportunities for development and economic, environmental and social challenges.

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(d) Constitutional issues will be considered, as appropriate, in preparing the White Paper.