

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department of Finance and Deregulation

Supplementary Estimates Hearing – October 2010

Outcome 1, Program NA

Topic: \$83.6 billion savings

Question reference number: 7a)-7c)

Type of Question: Hansard F&PA 88-92, 19 October 2010

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 3 December 2010

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Senator Cormann asked:

Okay, that saved us a bit of time. I turn to claimed savings by the government. Minister Wong, on a number of occasions, you have made the point and it was quoted in the *Australian* on 2 October again, that in the past three budgets ‘the government have made savings of \$83.6 billion to meet the costs of key reforms and intend to continue that discipline’. Can you detail these savings for us?

Senator Wong—Yes, I will take that on notice.

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Senator CORMANN—I would like to know the components, what years they are spread over, what departments were included. Essentially, I want the breakdown, yes.

Senator Wong—Yes, I will take that on notice.

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Senator CORMANN—Sure, I grant you that. It is a measure, and you might describe it as a savings measure, but I am now talking about the way the average Australian would understand it. This \$83.6 billion in savings includes both spending cuts as well as increases in revenue.

Mr Tune—I will double-check that, but I think that is the case. We will take it on notice.

Senator Wong—My recollection is it was described as reprioritisation of existing expenditure, Senator. I am not sure there are revenue measures. But, as I said to you, I have taken on notice—

Senator CORMANN—Can you please have a look at this—

Senator Wong—Senator, let me finish. I have taken on notice to come back to you with the details of the \$83.6 billion, and I will do so.

Senator CORMANN—I think Mr Tune started off by saying that, yes, it does, so—

Mr Tune—I am just checking, Senator. I will have to take it on notice. I will have to confirm on notice.

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Senator CORMANN—Can I please get a breakdown on notice then, just to clarify what I am looking for, of how much out of the \$83.6 billion in savings is made up of revenue increases and how much of it is made up on spending cuts, and a proper breakdown of what those revenue increases and spending cuts are, so we can properly scrutinise it.

Senator Wong—We will do that.

Answer:

- a) – c) This question was answered through the response to Parliamentary Question on Notice No. 169. Any additional details relating to the measures nominated in this response may be found in the 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11 editions of Budget Paper 2.