

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 17-20 October 2011

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.1 Domestic Policy

Topic: Asian Century White Paper

Senator: Senator Abetz

Question reference number: 28

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Question:

Senator ABETZ: Am I to understand that Dr Henry's paper Australia in the Asian century will in fact be a discussion document?

Dr De Brouwer: No, it is a white paper. It will go through normal cabinet processes, so it will be a government statement, but Dr Henry will consult widely in terms of getting the material provided to the government on that matter.

Senator ABETZ: In his wide consultations, will he perchance trip to the department of foreign affairs?

Dr De Brouwer: The department of foreign affairs is engaged as a member of the task force, so we will be a member of the task force supporting Dr Henry and?

Senator ABETZ: Have they been advised of that?

Dr De Brouwer: Yes.

Senator ABETZ: Do you know when?

Dr De Brouwer: No.

Senator ABETZ: If you could take that on notice for me, because it is of interest that as of, and I forget exactly which date, Mr Rudd and the department did not have this matter up on their website. So I might ask foreign affairs about it: if they have put it up on their website and, if so, when.

Dr De Brouwer: I add that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is also represented on the advisory board supporting Dr Henry.

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Answer:

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) was involved in discussions about the arrangements of the task force during discussions with senior officials of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. These discussions were held before the Prime Minister announced the White Paper on 28 September 2011.

Dr Ian Watt discussed the possible Australia in the Asian Century White Paper with the Secretary of DFAT, Mr Dennis Richardson on 26 September 2011.