

COMMITTEE INQUIRY QUESTION

(Question No.6)

Senator the Hon Kim Carr asked the Department of Defence, upon notice, on 17 November 2021:

Kim Carr: Admiral Mead, you made some comments to the inquiry in the last – in October. In fact, you took a number of questions on notice. I'm wondering when were the answers given back to the secretariat from that hearing? What date were they sent back to the committee?

Jonathan Mead: Can I take that one on notice there, Senator, so I can get the information and are there any specific questions you're talking about?

Kim Carr: Well, the fact remains there's a whole series of questions that I'm talking about, because I would like to address the fact that the questions were so poorly answered and were answered in a manner that gave Senators very little time to actually deal with them before the Senate Estimates. And at the hearing we did ask for this matter to be given some priority and now my understanding is that answers were received by the secretariat on the 26th and the estimates appeared on the 27th. In fact, many of the answered were not received until 09 November, after the estimates. Can you confirm that?

Jonathan Mead: Can I just say I'll check with staff here at the moment and I'll aim to get that answer back to you before the end of this hearing.

Kim Carr: Thank you, Admiral, and can you tell me the date they were given to the Minister's office because it might be that my concerns are miss directed that they were not with the Department of Defence, but the Minister's office. So, can you tell me the day on which they went to the Minister's office?

Jonathan Mead: We will work that one, Senator. I'm sure your concerns are not misdirected. It would have been work in the Department prior to craft the response. We had a huge number of questions on notice that came out of the last SERC, and we did need to work through them.

The Department of Defence has provided the following answer to the Honourable Senator's question:

Questions were taken on notice at the Senate Economic References Committee on 15 October 2021.

60 responses were provided to the committee on 26 October 2021.

33 responses were provided to the committee on 27 October 2021.

40 responses were provided to the committee on 09 November 2021.

These responses were provided to the Minister's office between 20-26 October 2021.