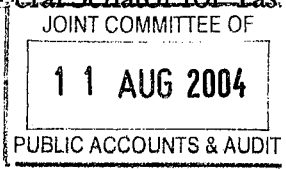


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JAMES



SENATOR THE HON ERIC ABETZ  
Special Minister of State  
Liberal Senator for Tasmania



19 0 2004

Mr Bob Charles MP  
Chairman  
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

11 AUG 2004

Dear Mr Charles *Bob,*

I refer to your letter of 23 June 2004 to Senator the Hon Nick Minchin about a government response to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit Report 377 of September 2000. Senator Minchin has asked me to respond on his behalf in my capacity as the Minister responsible for government communication activities.

I am informed by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet that in November 2000 the Committee Secretariat advised the department that a formal response was not required as the matter contained only an administrative recommendation and as such could be handled as the relevant Minister considered appropriate.

I note from the Chairman's Foreword to Report 377 that the Committee wished to produce draft guidelines for the government to consider. I also note that these draft guidelines were the subject of a strong and cogent dissenting statement from the only member of your Committee with extensive current experience in the area of Government communications activities. I can advise that the government has considered this matter and decided not to adopt those draft guidelines.

As you would be aware, the government has continued to observe the *Guidelines for Australian Government Information Activities* that were adopted by the previous Labor government in February 1995.

Yours sincerely

ERIC ABETZ