

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES – 21 OCTOBER 2010 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Incoming Government Briefing

Question reference number: HS 20

Senator: Fielding

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 December 2010

Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. Did the department prepare a post-election brief for a returned Labor Government (the so-called 'Red Book')?
2. Can the department provide the committee with a copy of this brief?
3. If not, can the department outline its reasons for refusing to provide a copy of this brief?
4. If the department will not provide a copy of this brief because it contains confidential or sensitive information, can the department provide a redacted copy of this brief as was done by the Treasury Department?
5. Has the Minister given any instructions to the department regarding the release of this brief and if so, what were these instructions?
6. Did the department prepare a post-election brief for a newly elected Coalition Government (the 'Blue Book')?
7. Can the department provide the committee with a copy of this brief?
8. If not, can the department outline its reasons for refusing to provide a copy of this brief?
9. If the department will not provide a copy of this brief because it contains confidential or sensitive information, can the department provide a redacted copy of this brief as was done by the Treasury Department?
10. Has the Minister given any instructions to the department regarding the release of this brief and if so, what were these instructions?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. Yes. The Department is providing the Committee with a redacted copy of the brief (the 'Red Book'). A copy of the redacted Red Book is also available on the Department of Human Services' website. The Red Book has been redacted to delete material exempt from release under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. The Minister for Human Services has written to the Committee to claim public interest immunity for the redacted material.
3. Not applicable.
4. Yes, see the answer to question 2.

5. The Minister for Human Services has written to the Committee to claim public interest immunity for the redacted material in the Red Book. The Minister has not given any other instructions.
6. No, a draft document was prepared but the document was not finalised.
7. Yes. The Department is providing the Committee a redacted copy of the draft brief (the 'Blue Book'). The redacted material would be exempt from release under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. The Minister for Human Services has written to the Committee to claim public interest immunity for the redacted material. It is important to note that the draft Blue Book was not finalised and therefore it does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Human Services on the matters covered by the document.
8. Not applicable.
9. Yes, see answer to question 7.
10. The Minister for Human Services has written to the Committee to claim public interest immunity for the redacted material in the draft Blue Book. The Minister has not given any other instructions.