

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016

Communications Portfolio

nbn

Question No: 121

nbn

Hansard Ref: Written, 22/02/2016

Topic: Caretaker Conventions

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

The current Guidance on the Caretaker Conventions published by Prime Minister & Cabinet state that:

1.4 There are also established practices associated with the caretaker conventions that are directed at protecting the apolitical nature of the public service and avoiding the use of Commonwealth resources in a manner to advantage a particular party. The conventions and practices also aim to prevent controversies about the role of the public service distracting attention from the substantive issues in the election campaign.

1.5 The conventions and practices have developed primarily in the context of the relationship between Ministers' and their departments (and, by extension since the commencement of the *Public Service Act 1999*, executive agencies). The relationship between Ministers and other bodies, such as statutory authorities and government companies, varies from body to body. However, those bodies should observe the conventions and practices unless to do so would conflict with their legal obligations or compelling organisational requirements.

- (a) Is NBN Co board and management aware of the caretaker conventions?
- (b) Has NBN Co discussed the forthcoming 2016 guidance on the caretaker conventions with Government?
- (c) Does NBN Co have an implementation plan for the caretaker period, or at least a set of guidelines? If so, please provide the plan and/or guidelines.

Answer:

- a) The nbn Board and Management are aware of the caretaker conventions.
- b) nbn has discussed the caretaker conventions with Government.
- c) nbn observes and abides by the caretaker conventions as set out by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.