

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

2016 - 2017

Department/Agency: Treasury

Question: BET336

Topic: FIRB Screening Policy - Ministerial Representations

Reference: Hansard page no. 115 - 6 May 2016

Senator: Penny Wong

Question:

Senator WONG: Yes. When potential investors are required to submit applications to FIRB for consideration, would you agree that that creates additional costs, risks potential delays and creates higher regulatory risks for investors, as is demonstrated by the Kidman example?

Mr Lonsdale: I will answer it this way. The government deals with around 800 commercial cases a year. The vast majority of those cases go through very, very quickly and with few, if any, issues. There are some significant cases—of which you have raised one—where the framework provides the government to look very, very closely at the public interest considerations of the deal. In this case, the decision maker, the Treasurer, came to the view that he did not support the transaction.

Senator WONG: Perhaps this is a question for the minister. Has the Deputy Prime Minister made any representations to the Treasurer in relation to this matter?

Senator McGrath: I am not aware of any. I would have to take that on notice.

Senator WONG: Mr Lonsdale, are you aware?

Mr Lonsdale: I have not seen a letter with representations.

Senator WONG: That is not what I asked.

Mr Lonsdale: I am not aware of any.

Answer:

Treasury is not aware of any representations.