

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

2016 - 2017

Division/Agency: Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

Question No: 202

Topic: Ombudsman media release

Reference: Hansard pages 29-30 (20 October 2016)

Senator: Gallagher, Katy

Question:

Senator GALLAGHER: On the 31st you issued a media release that says 'Ombudsman to use royal commission powers to probe banks'.

Ms Carnell: Yes.

Senator GALLAGHER: Was that media release generated in your office?

Ms Carnell: Yes.

Senator GALLAGHER: Did you consult with the minister's office over this media release?

Ms Carnell: No.

Senator GALLAGHER: Did you need to send it to him for approval?

Ms Carnell: No, we are an independent office. We do not run things past the minister's office for approval. We certainly make sure the minister gets copies of the stuff we are going to send out. We have a bit of a view of no surprises—

Senator GALLAGHER: Ahead of time?

Ms Carnell: I am not sure. We possibly did in this case—we would have in this case because it was his request to do the inquiry. For normal media releases, that is not the case. We would send them to the minister's office at the same time as we would send them to the media.

Senator GALLAGHER: Can you recall whether there was any discussion about the content of the media release or any changes to the media release as a result of sending it to the minister's office?

Ms Carnell: Not that I remember, but I am happy to take that on notice and ask my media person whether there was any change. I do not believe there was.

Answer:

The media release was drafted and issued without any external consultation.