

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2014-15

Finance Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Electoral Commission

Outcome/Program: General

Topic: Discrepancies between party and company donations

Senator: Rhiannon

Question reference number: F45

Type of question: Hansard, F&PA Committee, Page 119, 24 February 2015

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 10 April 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator RHIANNON: Can you can take this on notice: if you have detected these discrepancies and if they have been followed up—and this was just from our research in looking at the returns that you have publicly put up on your website—where the party has disclosed the amount but the company has not. The federal Liberal Party disclosed a donation of \$250,000 from the New Hope Corporation Ltd, but the company has not. The ACT branch of the Liberal Party disclosed a donation of \$217,800 from the defence industry company Stratsec, which has not disclosed that. Also, the Queensland branch of the Labor Party disclosed a donation of \$200,000 from NewMR¹, but the company did not. I was interested if you were aware of these donations that were not disclosed by the donors and if you have requested that they put in amended returns.

Mr Rogers: I will take that on notice.

Answer:

Yes, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is aware of these donations. In each case there is no requirement for an amendment to the disclosure record.

New Hope Corporation is a subsidiary of Washington H Soul Pattinson and Company Limited. Under s.287(6) of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (the Act) related bodies corporate are deemed to be a single entity for disclosure purposes. Accordingly, Washington H Soul Pattinson and Company Limited lodged a return on behalf of both companies. This return disclosed the donation of \$250,000 made by New Hope Corporation to the Liberal Party of Australia and therefore the donor fulfilled their disclosure obligations under the Act.

The receipt from StratSec.Net Pty Ltd was identified on the Liberal Party of Australia – ACT Division return as not being a donation. It was identified on the return as being an ‘other receipt’. StratSec.Net Pty Ltd has therefore fulfilled its disclosure obligations under the Act.

The receipt from UMR Research P/L was identified on the Australian Labor Party (State of Queensland) return as not being a donation. It was identified on the return as being an ‘other receipt’. UMR Research P/L has therefore fulfilled its disclosure obligations under the Act.

¹ The Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee has confirmed that the reference should be ‘UMR’.