

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates Hearing 25-29 May 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet
Topic: PPL

Senator: Senator Katy Gallagher

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Question:

Senator GALLAGHER: Perhaps this is because I am new, but could you tell me where the savings were identified in the pre-election costings? What document could I refer to?

Senator Cormann: If you look at the information released at the time as part of the pre-election costings. This is 2013. I obviously have not got our pre-election costings document here with me, but I can send you about one dozen transcripts of interviews that I gave personally in the lead-up to last election, where I explicitly referenced this as a key part of our policy. When we were questioned on how we would fund it, there were obviously various components to it—the temporary paid parental leave levy and various other components. But one of the savings that was built into the system that we took the last election was that we would stop public servants from accessing two taxpayer funded schemes, and that was part of the conversation very explicitly in the lead-up to last election.

Senator GALLAGHER: I must have missed that in terms of a specific focus on public servants.

Senator Cormann: I see Senator Wong shaking her head. I am happy to send you the transcripts.

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Senator Cormann: No, that is not right. The negotiation at COAG was about making sure that as part of an integrated, consolidated superior scheme, the resources put into state based, public sector paid parental leave arrangements would be rolled into that overall consolidated scheme so that the Commonwealth would only incur the marginal additional cost. There was no suggestion there of state or federal public servants having access to two taxpayer funded schemes.

To assist you, I have a series here. I will just read them into Hansard and then you can check them out. In an interview on 28 August 2013 on ABC Radio's AM, I very explicitly referenced the part of the policy which prevented access to two taxpayer funded schemes for public servants. That was part of our savings. On ABC News Capital Hill on 26 August 2013; on Sky News PM Agenda, 2.30 pm on 22 August 2013; on Fairfax Online Breaking Politics on 22 August 2013—

Senator WONG: Okay, thank you.

Senator Cormann: I can give you a whole long list—

Senator GALLAGHER: I think you undertook to provide them to me on notice, which would be useful

Answer:

The information about public servants not being allowed to access two taxpayer funded schemes; and pre-election costings can be found at:

<http://www.liberal.org.au/latest-news/2013/08/28/update-coalitions-responsible-savings>
(page 5)

http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Budget_Office/2013_Election (page 30)