

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: Air Warfare Destroyer project

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Question reference number: 29

Type of question: FPA Tuesday 26 May 2015, pages 31 - 33

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 June 2015

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Dr McCarthy: Yes. The Department of Finance and the Department of Defence were involved in that work.

Senator WONG: When was PM&C first aware of that work being undertaken?

Dr McCarthy: I would need to take that on notice.

Senator WONG: When did you become aware of the analysis?

Dr McCarthy: I would need to take that on notice.

...

Senator WONG: The process and the people involved in what you variously described as forensic audit, comprehensive cost review or rebaselining exercise—as I said, I do not take shorthand, and you read through the names very quickly—I wonder if you could possibly table. I do not need all the other stuff in your brief—that obviously is a matter for you—but the structure involved. Dr McCarthy, when did you become aware of this forensic audit/rebaselining exercise/comprehensive cost review?

Dr McCarthy: I would need to take that on notice.

...

Senator WONG: Who made the decision to call in a forensic audit?

Senator Cormann: I would have to take that on notice.

...

Senator WONG: Will the government release a redacted copy of the report?

Senator Cormann: I will take that on notice.

...

Senator WONG: Was the release of the information authorised by government?

Senator Cormann: I will take on notice whether there is anything else I can add to the information.

...

Senator WONG: Senator Cormann, while we are on this, has any member of the alliance contacted you or your office or, to your knowledge, the department to request a copy of this report?

...

Senator Cormann: I will have to take that on notice. Obviously, the alliance was involved in putting the report together. Let me take that question on notice.

Answer:

1. When was PM&C first aware of that work being undertaken?

August 2014.

2. When did you become aware of the analysis?

May 2015.

3. Dr McCarthy, when did you become aware of this forensic audit/re-baselining exercise/comprehensive cost review?

May 2015.

4. Who made the decision to call it a forensic audit?

The Department of Finance may be better placed to answer this question as the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet was not involved in the titling of the report

5. Will the government release a redacted copy of the report?

It is the longstanding practice of successive governments not to disclose what matters may have been considered by the Cabinet or its committees including the National Security Committee of Cabinet.

6. Was the release of the information authorised by government?

It is the longstanding practice of successive governments not to disclose what matters may have been considered by the Cabinet or its committees including the National Security Committee of Cabinet.

7. Has any member of the alliance contacted you or your office or, to your knowledge, the department to request a copy of this report?

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has not been contacted by the alliance.

The Minister for Finance's office may be better placed to answer this question as it relates to whether his office was contacted by the alliance.