

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SENATE ESTIMATES SESSION

Supplementary Budget Estimates 18-22 November 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Indigenous Land Corporation

Outcome/Program: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Indigenous Land Corporation – Ayers Rock Resort

Senator: Senator Dean Smith

Question reference number: 225

Type of Question: Hansard

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 January 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator McLucas: I wonder if Mr Dillon could table those letters. I do not know the dates, and I agree with Senator Smith: I think the response from the chair would be valuable for the committee to have.

Mr Dillon, you said that there were a number of letters from Minister Wong and Minister Macklin to the chair of the ILC board—is that correct?

Mr Dillon: There was at least one letter from each minister in October 2010 and then, as I recall, Minister Wong wrote the day before the transaction in fact, and asked under section 16 of the CAC Act for further information. The response that was provided was, essentially, 'this deal is too good for us to put it on hold', because in her correspondence, Minister Wong had asked the ILC to defer the consideration. What happened was that the ILC made the decision to acquire the very next day—

Senator SMITH: I am happy to take your word, but if you do have the letters then it would be wise to circulate them because of the time constraint. Do you have a schedule or a table of all the letters on this matter from the ILC to Minister Wong and to Minister Macklin in addition to the letters from Minister Wong and Minister Macklin back to the ILC on this matter?

Mr Dillon: I do not have a table of that correspondence.

Senator SMITH: You do not have a table but you would have a collection of them?

Mr Dillon: I could take that on notice and provide you with a list of that correspondence.

Senator SMITH: You have brought with you some letters, but you have not brought with you all the letters?

Mr Dillon: As I said at the start, we would have thousands and thousands of documents on this issue going back over two years.

Senator SMITH: No, I am asking for letters from the ILC to Minister Wong and to Minister Macklin. Senator McLucas, if I understand her question, is asking for letters from Minister Wong and Minister Macklin back to the ILC. I do not expect there will

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SENATE ESTIMATES SESSION

Supplementary Budget Estimates 18-22 November 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

be thousands of those, because that would not be good practice, I would not have thought, at that sort of level in the government.

Mr Dillon: The ILC would have responded to each of those letters from ministers and I would be happy to table those letters. I would be happy to let you know if there is other correspondence to those ministers that is relevant to this transaction.

Senator SMITH: Put it all in a table and then senators can make a judgement about which of those letters they would like to see.

Ms Carroll: Senator, if I can intervene, we are just getting some clarification. The table of actual letters is not a problem at all, identifying what the letters were. We just need to take on notice to give some advice to the minister on the release of those letters, because it was deliberations of the previous government. It is a statutory organisation but we just want to take it on notice before the letters themselves were actually released.....

Answer:

Schedule of Ministerial Correspondence - ACQUISITION OF AYERS ROCK RESORT	
Date	Details of letter
19 August 2009	Letter from the Hon Jenny Macklin MP to Shirley McPherson
22 September 2010	Letter from the Hon Jenny Macklin MP to Ms Shirley McPherson
23 September 2010	Letter from Shirley McPherson to the Hon Jenny Macklin MP
29 September 2010	Letter from Senator the Hon Penny Wong to Shirley McPherson
30 September 2010	Letter from Shirley McPherson to Senator the Hon Penny Wong
1 October 2010	Letter from Shirley McPherson to Senator the Hon Penny Wong
8 October 2010	Letter from Senator the Hon Penny Wong to Shirley McPherson
5 November 2010	Letter from Shirley McPherson to Senator the Hon Penny Wong
1 February 2011	Letter from Senator the Hon Penny Wong to Shirley McPherson