

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

**Corporate**

**Question No. 199**

**Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 24 February 2014:**

Was the minister on leave at any point during the Christmas break (between the last sitting of parliament in 2013 and the first sitting in 2014)? If so:

i. Please table a schedule of the ministers leave. Please include:

- a. The dates the minister was on leave.
- b. The dates the minister was out of the country (if applicable).

ii. Who was acting in the minister's place?

- a. What date was it decided to have this person act in the minister's place?
- b. What was the process for selecting this person?
- c. Who was involved in making this decision?

iii. Were there any matters with which the department needed to make contact with the minister during this time? If so:

- a. Please provide a list of these matters and the date they occurred
- b. Please provide a copy of any correspondence, emails, notes etc between the minister and the department during this time.
- c. Were there any times that the department was aware that it would be unable to communicate with the minister?
- d. Were there any times that the department tried to contact the minister but were unable?

iv. Were there any matters with which the department needed to make contact with the acting minister during this time? If so:

- a. Please provide a list of these matters and the date they occurred
- b. Please provide a copy of any correspondence, emails, notes etc between the acting minister and the department during this time.
- c. Were there any times that the department was aware that it would be unable to communicate with the acting minister?
- d. Were there any times that the department tried to contact the acting minister but were unable?

v. Did the department contact the Minister or acting minister during this time? If so:

- a. Please provide a list of these matters and the date they occurred
- b. Please provide a copy of any correspondence, emails, notes etc between the minister and or acting minister and the department during this time.

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

- i. a. The Attorney-General took a period of leave between 23 December 2013 and 9 January 2014. The Minister for Justice took a period of leave between 10 January 2014 and 21 January 2014.  
b. The Department does not have this information.
- ii. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, acted as Attorney-General. The Attorney-General, Senator the Hon George Brandis QC, acted as Minister for Justice.  
a-c. The Department does not have this information.
- iii-v. This information is not kept by the Department in a way that would enable it to be provided.