

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Question No. 2

Senator Fifield asked the following question at the hearing on 23 May 2012:

Senator FIFIELD: ... Ms Branson, at the last estimates I asked some questions on behalf of Senator Humphries in relation to the efficiency dividend. I think you indicated that you had written to Minister Wong.

Ms Branson: I did and I tabled the letter.

Senator FIFIELD: That is right. I do not think at that time you had had a reply? I cannot recall.

Ms Branson: No, I had not at that stage received a reply. I did receive one either in late January or early February this year indicating that no move would be made by the department of finance on the issue, drawing my attention to the possibility of interdepartmental reallocation of the dividend. That is where the matter has been left.

Senator FIFIELD: Are you able to table a copy of that reply?

Ms Branson: I could do so. I do not have it with me, but I could do that.

Senator FIFIELD: Thank you for that.

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

A copy of the letter from Senator Wong, Minister for Finance, is attached.



RECEIVED
21/02/12

SENATOR THE HON PENNY WONG
Minister for Finance and Deregulation

REF:C11/3973

Ms Catherine Branson QC
President, Australian Human Rights Commission
GPO Box 5218
SYDNEY NSW 2001

16 FEB 2012

Dear Ms Branson

Thank you for your letter of 7 December 2011 regarding the impact of the additional 2.5 per cent one-off efficiency dividend on the Australian Human Rights Commission.

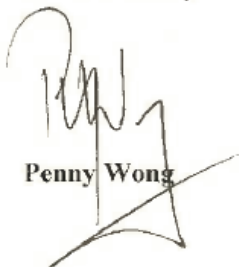
I note that in making its decision in relation to the additional 2.5 per cent one-off efficiency dividend, the Government allowed for the possibility that the circumstances of some agencies within portfolios may mean that they have less flexibility in managing the effects of the dividend than others.

Specifically, the Government agreed that it is open to portfolio Ministers to propose a reallocation of the 2.5 per cent one-off efficiency dividend between portfolio entities. These arrangements have been set out in Estimates Memorandum – 2011/44. In cases where Portfolio Ministers wish to pursue a reallocation between their agencies, they have been asked to write to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation seeking a reallocation by 16 January 2012 or, alternatively, they may include the proposed changes in their 2012-13 portfolio budget submissions for consideration by Cabinet.

While the issue of whether to pursue a reallocation between agencies within the Attorney-General's Portfolio is a matter for the Attorney-General, I suggest that, having regard to the issues raised in your letter, if you wish to pursue the matter further, you consider raising it with the Attorney-General.

I am providing a copy of this letter to the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, Attorney-General.

Yours sincerely



Penny Wong