

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing
26 February 2009

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: OFFICE OF SENATOR THE HON KIM CARR

TOPIC: GM Advertisement

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 26 February 2009, E82)

QUESTION No.: AI-37

Senator ABETZ—...Can you explain the time line to us of how it came to be that the Prime Minister appeared in an advertisement for Holden?

Senator Carr—Is this the Australia Day weekend advertisement?

Senator ABETZ—How many ads has he appeared in? I thought there was only one, but if you have trouble identifying it then tell us how many he has appeared in and I will ask about all of them.

Senator Carr—There was an advertisement that appeared on Australia Day that I understood used previously published footage of the Prime Minister and me at the Holden factory.

Senator ABETZ—I do not think you featured in it.

Senator Carr—I have not seen the ad myself; I have better things to do with my time.

Senator ABETZ—GM was smart enough not to have you in the ad. Do not delude yourself in that regard.

Senator CAMERON—They must have thought you were marketable.

Senator Carr—That is probably what it was.

Senator ABETZ—Not him; Mr Rudd possibly, but not the minister. Were you, your office or the department contacted about permission to use that particular footage of the Prime Minister in the ad?

Senator Carr—Yes.

Senator ABETZ—Which one? Was it you, your office or the department?

Senator Carr—My office.

Senator ABETZ—Were you personally involved in that?

Senator Carr—From my recollection I was, yes.

Senator ABETZ—Did you then put that request to the Prime Minister's office?

Senator Carr—I cannot recall that. I made the call about the use of public footage in an advertisement for a great Australian product at a time when the industry is under considerable pressure.

Senator ABETZ—Did you contact the Prime Minister's office to get their approval or the Prime Minister's approval for use in the advertisement?

Senator Carr—I did not contact anyone.

Senator ABETZ—Thank you for that. Did any person in your office contact anybody?

Senator Carr—I will have to make inquiries on that because I am not aware.

Senator ABETZ—You are not aware. The Prime Minister's office is on record as saying that there were discussions and that it was your office that provided the approval.

Senator Carr—I will establish what the circumstances were.

Senator ABETZ—Can you give us a full and detailed account of all the conversations between your office and the Prime Minister's office and then who it was? I do not need to know the name of the officer, but whether it was an officer in your office or you who personally passed on the permission to General Motors for that footage to be used in the advertisement.

Senator Carr—I have taken the question on notice.

ANSWER

GM Holden contacted my office on Tuesday, 20 January 2009. My office then spoke with the Prime Minister's Media office, and advised that GM Holden proposed to use footage of the announcement at the Elizabeth factory in its promotional material. The Prime Minister's office did not object to the use of this footage and my office responded to GM Holden with this advice on Thursday, 22 January 2009.