

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Budget Estimates
13 February 2013

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: FOI request – Grants to Holden, Toyota and Ford

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 13 February 2013, page 33)

QUESTION No.: AI-13

Senator RYAN: I will turn to the rejection of the Financial Review's request under freedom of information about the amount of public money provided to Holden, Toyota and Ford. Who was the official who took the decision and communicated it to Holden, under the FOI Act?

Mr Durrant: That was me.

Senator RYAN: Can we go to your reasons for denying that request? It has been reported, and the quote I will use with respect to your denial of the request, is that the figures would not contribute in any meaningful way to informing debate on a matter of public importance. Did you write that?

Mr Durrant: I gave a comprehensive response to the Fin Review about their request. You can take that out of context, but there is context on what we decided.

Senator RYAN: I do not have copy of the letter; is it possible for that to be provided?

Mr Durrant: I will check with people from the FOI area to see if it is possible.

Senator RYAN: I am not familiar with the provisions of the act in that regard.

Ms Tregurtha: In relation to disclosure of documents around FOI applications, generally speaking, we have to be cautious around privacy concerns before we release correspondence to and from applicants and third parties. Subject to dealing with that issue, it may be possible to release that correspondence.

Senator RYAN: You would have to consult with both the parties mentioned in the letter, and the people making the application, with respect to the release of it and make a judgement as to whether anything should be blacked out or released at all?

Ms Tregurtha: That is right.

Senator RYAN: Could I ask you to take that into consideration, and, following consideration, provide on notice what you feel is appropriate?

Ms Tregurtha: Yes, we can take that on notice.

ANSWER

A copy of the FOI decision letter is attached to the answer to Question on Notice AI-14.