



SENATOR THE HON KIM CARR

**MINISTER FOR INNOVATION, INDUSTRY,
SCIENCE AND RESEARCH**

Senator Annette Hurley
Chair
Economics Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Hurley

I am writing to clarify evidence I gave during the Budget Estimates hearing on Monday 1 June 2009.

It has been drawn to my attention that, during the hearing of the Economics Legislation Committee on 1 June 2009, in response to a question from Senator Abetz, I said (p. 103):

Senator Abetz – ...In last week's *Financial Review* there was a position advertised in your office for assistant adviser – is that correct?

Senator Carr – Yes.

Senator Abetz – Is that a new position?

Senator Carr – Yes.

The advertised vacancy results from the allocation of a new position to my office, as of 1 July 2009, and the movement of staff within my office to fill that position. This will create a vacancy in the Assistant Adviser level, but the Assistant Adviser position itself is not new.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kim Carr', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kim Carr



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Proof Committee Hansard

SENATE

ECONOMICS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES

(Budget Estimates)

MONDAY, 1 JUNE 2009

CANBERRA

CORRECTIONS TO PROOF ISSUE

This is a **PROOF ISSUE**. Suggested corrections for the Bound Volumes should be lodged **in writing** with the Committee Secretary (Facsimile (02) 6277 5719), **as soon as possible but no later than:**

Monday, 3 August 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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Senator ABETZ—People in the innovation space who are serious—

Senator Carr—You know what happened to the productivity statistics under your government.

Senator ABETZ—I know exactly what happened to Commercial Ready in your very first budget and I know what that has done to the innovation sector. But we have had these debates before and I am saying to you that for these matters, whilst they are clearly matters for partisan debate, to appear in a white paper, where the government is inviting everybody to treat it seriously, really undermines its own credibility and the opportunity that we have in the innovation space courtesy of your incapacity to desist from making cheap political commentary.

Senator Carr—That is your political view.

Senator ABETZ—As a result, you are prejudicing the innovation sector in this country and the innovation agenda that you are asserting you are seeking to pursue, because it does the government no credit when it produces such a partisan document.

Senator Carr—We had the biggest increase in 30 years. You had an opportunity to match that report and you failed.

Senator ABETZ—It is very good to have an increase after you have cut \$700 million out the year before. It is very easy to have a 30 per cent increase when the previous year you chopped out \$700 million. Let us have a look at the base from which you are starting. In last week's *Financial Review* there was a position advertised in your office for assistance adviser—is that correct?

Senator Carr—Yes.

Senator ABETZ—Is that a new position?

Senator Carr—Yes.

Senator ABETZ—Can you please update the committee on your staff breakdown?

Senator Carr—I will take that on notice.

Senator ABETZ—That is fine. You are entitled to, but most people would assume that the minister might have an understanding of his staff allocation. I refer to the John Button prize for political and public policy writing and ask whether that had any money contributed to it from your department.

Senator Carr—No.

Senator ABETZ—In relation to the government's skills council decision, the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce has expressed its regret that placing the automotive industry with a manufacturing skills council is wrong. Without going into the rights and wrongs about it, I want to know what consultation took place with the automotive sector prior to that decision being made.

Senator Carr—There was quite extensive consultation. You will recall this matter was canvassed in the Bracks report.

Senator ABETZ—The VACC has, as you know, denounced this decision. And just because it was referred to in the Bracks report does not necessarily mean it is a good idea. Since the Bracks report did you consult with the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, for example, about this change?

Senator Carr—I think you should go to the appropriate committee. The education and training estimates will deal with that matter.

Senator ABETZ—Yes, but did you have any input into that decision?

Senator Carr—We provided advice.

Senator ABETZ—So you did provide some advice. You either would have provided advice to ignore the concerns of the automotive sector or you yourself were ignored in relation to the advice that you may have—

Senator Carr—I cannot comment further.

Senator ABETZ—I assumed you would say that. I take you to AI-40 from Senate estimates last time, when I asked questions about the Holden announcement? Can you confirm to me that you can tell me what matters are considered by cabinet?

Senator Carr—I have nothing further to add.

Senator ABETZ—To what?