

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio  
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2010-11  
20 October 2010

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

**TOPIC:** Caretaker conventions

**REFERENCE:** Written Question–Senator Colbeck

**QUESTION No.:** SI-63

1. Did the Secretary or any other senior officer provide written and/or verbal notification to staff shortly before the election about the Department's obligations under the caretaker conventions?
2. As part of that notification: what were they advised, and what guidelines were given to them, about needing to withdraw any support (even if it's only a perception of support) to the Government in the election campaign period?
3. From the Department's point of view, is it confident that the advice staff were given meant that they should have been sufficiently aware that they shouldn't have been seen to be aligning themselves in any way with the Government during the election campaign period?
4. What kind of action would be taken against an employee who breached those guidelines?

**ANSWER**

1. Yes.
2. Staff were advised of the Caretaker Conventions issued by the Department of the Prime and Cabinet and additional Portfolio specific advice based on the conventions.
3. Yes.
4. If any actions were undertaken in relation to breaches of guidelines, they would be in accordance with the APS Values and the APS Code of Conduct.