

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Senate Estimates
20 October 2010

Question: SR12
Topic: Incoming Government Briefing
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Fielding asked:

1. Did the department prepare a post-election brief for a returned Labor Government (the so-called 'Red Book')?
2. Can the department provide the committee with a copy of this brief?
3. If not, can the department outline its reasons for refusing to provide a copy of this brief?
4. If the department will not provide a copy of this brief because it contains confidential or sensitive information, can the department provide a redacted copy of this brief as was done by the Treasury Department?
5. Has the Minister given any instructions to the department regarding the release of this brief and if so, what were these instructions?
6. Did the department prepare a post-election brief for a newly elected Coalition Government (the 'Blue Book')?
7. Can the department provide the committee with a copy of this brief?
8. If not, can the department outline its reasons for refusing to provide a copy of this brief?
9. If the department will not provide a copy of this brief because it contains confidential or sensitive information, can the department provide a redacted copy of this brief as was done by the Treasury Department?
10. Has the Minister given any instructions to the department regarding the release of this brief and if so, what were these instructions?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. Not at this time.
3. The Department has received a Freedom of Information (FOI) application for the “Red Book” and is currently processing it. The Department will make publicly available those parts of the Red Book that are not exempt under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and will make a claim for public interest immunity in relation to those parts that are exempt. It would be contrary to the public interest to disclose the exempt parts of the Red Book, as it would preclude the smooth transition from one government to the next and consideration by an incoming government of significant structural and policy issues.
4. Not at this time, for the reasons outlined in answer 3 above.
5. No.
6. Yes.
7. Not at this time.
8. The Department has received a FOI application for the “Blue Book” and is currently processing it. The Department makes a claim of public interest immunity in relation to parts of the Blue Book that contain deliberative material on the basis that disclosure of those parts of the Blue Book would be contrary to the public interest, as it would preclude the smooth transition from one government to the next and consideration by an incoming government of significant structural and policy issues.
9. Not at this time, for the reasons outlined in answer 8 above.
10. No.