

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Additional Estimates 2012-2013**

**Outcome 4 - Workplace Relations and Economic Strategy**

**DEEWR Question No. EW0942\_13**

**Senator Abetz asked on 13 February 2013, Hansard page 115**

**Question**

***Australian Financial Review* article - Union Slush Fund**

Senator ABETZ: Moving on to another issue, can I have confirmed, Parliamentary Secretary, that the minister referred to the union slush fund—the type that the Prime Minister helped establish when she was a lawyer at Slater and Gordon—as 'unauthorised, inappropriate and out of bounds'. I am referring to the 22 November 2012 media report in the *Australian Financial Review* and also to what he said on the previous night's ABC Lateline. Senator Jacinta Collins: So you would like me to confirm with the minister that he said such a thing? Senator ABETZ: Yes, just to get it absolutely— Senator Jacinta Collins: But you saw it on Lateline? Senator ABETZ: I did not. It was reported in the media, as I told you, in the *Fin Review* on 22 November 2012. I just want to make sure that that is an accurate quote and representation of what Mr Shorten said. Senator Jacinta Collins: So that article is quoting him from Lateline? Senator ABETZ: That is right. Senator Jacinta Collins: I will take that on notice. ...(page 116) Senator ABETZ: ... has the minister supported the calls or made any public comments in relation to the suggestion made by Commissioner Ian Cambridge on 11 February that anybody with any knowledge of this matter should come forward and cooperate with the Victorian police fraud and extortion squad? Senator Jacinta Collins: I will take that on notice.

**Answer**

The Hon Bill Shorten MP, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, has provided the following responses:

In relation to my appearance on *Lateline* on 21 November 2012, I had the following exchange with the presenter, Mr Tony Jones:

**Tony Jones:** We know that as a lawyer Julia Gillard admitted she helped Bruce Wilson set one [a 'slush fund'] up, so I am asking what is it, what is one?

**Minister Shorten:** Oh, well, that account was unauthorised by the union and it was an inappropriate account, that account, as far as I can tell. So that was out of bounds.

I have not made any public comment specifically addressing the suggestion made by Commissioner Cambridge on 11 February 2013. However, I would encourage anybody with any specific information regarding allegations of illegality to refer the matter to the appropriate authority for investigation.