

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2013-2014**

Cross Portfolio

Department of Employment Question No. EM0356_14

Senator Ludwig provided in writing.

Question

Ministerial leave

Was the minister on leave at any point during the Christmas break (between the last sitting of parliament in 2013 and the first sitting in 2014)? If so:

- a. Please table a schedule of the ministers leave. Please include:
 - i. The dates the minister was on leave.
 - ii. The dates the minister was out of the country (if applicable).
- b. Who was acting in the minister's place?
 - i. What date was it decided to have this person act in the minister's place?
 - ii. What was the process for selecting this person?
 - iii. Who was involved in making this decision?
- c. Were there any matters with which the department needed to make contact with the minister during this time? If so:
 - i. Please provide a list of these matters and the date they occurred
 - ii. Please provide a copy of any correspondence, emails, notes etc between the minister and the department during this time.
 - iii. Were there any times that the department was aware that it would be unable to communicate with the minister?
 - iv. Were there any times that the department tried to contact the minister but were unable?
- d. Were there any matters with which the department needed to make contact with the acting minister during this time? If so:
 - i. Please provide a list of these matters and the date they occurred
 - ii. Please provide a copy of any correspondence, emails, notes etc between the acting minister and the department during this time.
 - iii. Were there any times that the department was aware that it would be unable to communicate with the acting minister?
 - iv. Were there any times that the department tried to contact the acting minister but were unable?
- e. Did the department contact the Minister or acting minister during this time? If so:
 - i. Please provide a list of these matters and the date they occurred
 - ii. Please provide a copy of any correspondence, emails, notes etc between the minister and or acting minister and the department during this time.

Answer

a – b) Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz was on leave between 28 December 2013 and 13 January 2014. During this time the Hon. Christopher Pyne MP, Minister for Education was the Acting Minister for Employment. The Hon. Luke Hartsuyker MP, Assistant Minister for Employment did not access leave at this time.

c – e) When a Minister is on leave the department continues to function as normal which includes preparing briefing material as needed for the Acting Minister. The specific detail requested is not disclosed publicly in the interest of maintaining confidentiality and effectiveness of the advice.