

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Finance and Administration Portfolio

Department of Finance and Administration

Additional Budget Estimates Hearings – 14 February 2006

Question: F31

Cross Outcomes

Topic: The Role of the Government Members Secretariat (GMS)

Hansard Page: F&PA 69

Senator Faulkner asked: The usual dictionary definition. Anyway, he has ruled that out. I want to be assured by the parliamentary secretary that GMS staff in fact have not been monitoring opposition members, MPs. I am sure that you would want the same assurance, Senator Mason. So could you assure both Senator Mason and me that there has been no monitoring by the GMS staff of opposition MPs who hold marginal seats? If you can give me that assurance I will be very pleased.

Senator Colbeck-The role of the GMS staff is at the direction of the Chief Government Whip. He determines their responsibilities. If you want to find out exactly what those responsibilities are you can leave me a question on notice and I will seek an answer for you.

Answer:

The GMS services and supports government members in the performance of their duties.

The GMS was established to assist its backbench Senators and Members by providing training and development support. GMS provides assistance through staff training and information sessions, newsletters, and briefings on Government programs and issues briefs.

Operational responsibility and staffing lies with the Chief Government Whip, Mr Kerry Bartlett MP.