

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Additional Budget Estimates Hearings 2006-2007, 12-13 February 2007

Question: PM 60

Outcome 1, Output 3.1

Topic: Alleged Australian Aid to Iraq 'Falling into Wrong Hands'

Direct on Notice:

Senator Evans asked:

What actions has PM&C initiated, or been involved in, to investigate the Australian Financial Review reporting of alleged corruption and waste of Australian aid to Iraq?

What follow-up action has the Department undertaken as a result of the investigations?

What actions has the Department instigated to ensure that aid is being distributed in accordance with the stated government objectives?

Has the Department informed the Prime Minister and/or his office on these matters? If so, when?

Answer:

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has received no information or advice to substantiate media speculation or warrant action in relation to alleged misuse of Australian aid to Iraq.

As a participant in an interdepartmental committee on Iraq, the department has received regular updates from AusAID on the implementation of Australia's reconstruction assistance strategy in Iraq. The responsibility for the implementation and administration of this strategy lies with the portfolio minister.

The department has not briefed the Prime Minister or his office on these unsubstantiated allegations in relation to alleged misuse of Australian aid to Iraq.

