

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 Estimates 23-27 February 2009

Question: PM48a-h

Outcome 1, Output 5

Topic: Official Gifts

Hansard Page: Written Question

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April

Senator Ronaldson asked: Further to questions asked at the Committee Meeting, can the Department provide the following information:

- a) **Is there a list of all official gifts received by Prime Ministers, where those gifts were not retained by the Prime Minister who received them? If so, how far back in time does this list go? Can this list, if it exists, be tabled?**
- b) **If no comprehensive list exists, what form of inventory control is used by the Department to manage those gifts which have been received into the Department's care? How can the Department assure itself that such items have not been removed from Departmental control?**
- c) **Were any of these 'unretained gifts' permanently disposed of? If so, how?**
- d) **How many of these 'unretained gifts' are or were consumable items, for example, bottles of wine?**
- e) **What happens to consumable 'unretained gifts' if the Prime Minister does not want them? How are such consumable products stored? Is there a virtual or actual wine cellar at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet?**
- f) **What is the ultimate disposition of consumable 'unretained gifts'?**
- g) **Who selects what 'unretained gifts' will be displayed at the Department in showcases? How often are these displays changed?**
- h) **Are any 'unretained gifts' sent to Australian cultural institutions for display? If so, which institutions have which items? Are they on 'permanent loan' to such institutions? If not, what are the terms and conditions of the lending?**

Answer:

(a) & (b) Attached is a list of official gifts received by the former Prime Minister the Honourable John Howard and Prime Minister the Honourable Kevin Rudd MP. The list contains all declared official gifts that have been surrendered and are above the allowable limit as outlined in the Guidelines Relating to Official Gifts Received issued by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Records relating to official gifts received by previous Prime Ministers are stored on obsolete computer software. Retrieving this information would be onerous and time-consuming for the Department, and therefore considered an unreasonable diversion of resources.

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 Estimates 23-27 February 2009

- (c) No.
- (d) See attached list.
- (e) Consumable 'unretained gifts' are surrendered to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The wine on the attached list has either been transferred to Official Establishments for use on official occasions, or has been donated to a number of charities.
- (f) In the Guidelines relating to Official Gifts Received, if a recipient elects not to purchase a gift that is determined to be over the allowable limit, the gift must be surrendered to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Recipients are encouraged to provide a recommendation for future use of surrendered official gifts along with a formal acknowledgement relinquishing the recipient's claim to ownership. Appropriate disposal action then takes place.
- (g) Officers within the Ceremonial and Hospitality Branch of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. There is no fixed schedule for rotation.
- (h) Gifts surrendered to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet may be transferred in title to Commonwealth departments, repositories of National Collections including museums, libraries, archives and special interest collections. No items from the attached lists have been transferred.