

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 13-16 Feb 2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.1 Domestic Policy

Topic: Minister for Social Inclusion - first briefing

Senator: Senator Fifield

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Question:

Senator FIFIELD: Thank you for that. In that case, I will move straight to the Social Inclusion portfolio, if I may. I think it was fairly widely publicised after Minister Butler was appointed as the Minister for Social Inclusion that, in answer to a question as to what his portfolio was, he replied, "Social inclusion: it means different things to different people." We do not have the Minister representing the Minister for Social Inclusion at the table. If we did, I would ask him what social inclusion means to him. We might hold that for when he pops back. Oh, he is over there!

While the minister is getting back to the table, can I just ask: after it was announced that Mr Butler would become the Minister for Social Inclusion, when did he receive his first briefing, written or oral, on his new portfolio responsibilities?

Mr Ronalds: I will need to go back and check the exact date, but it was within some days. However, I recall that the radio interview you were referring to happened on the day that he was actually appointed.

Answer:

An incoming Minister's brief was sent to Mr Butler's office on 15 December 2011.