

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 11-14 February 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.3 Support Services for Government Operations

Topic: Witness Availability

Senator: Senator Ryan

Question reference number: 16

Type of Question: FPA, P86

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 April 2013

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Dr de Brouwer: The officers were here before. They were here for most of this afternoon's discussion. They were called in, I thought, at around 4.30 or 5.00, there were these other meetings.

Senator RYAN: When are they going to get out?

Dr de Brouwer: I thought that they were on their way. I cannot answer that. I am not sure now.

Senator RYAN: Can you take on notice the following. I would like to know: when the notification was sent to the committee; who signed it off; and who sent it. And can I suggest that next time staff are going to be drawn out of here, a schedule known a long time in advance. There is one meeting that happens in this building which is used as a reason for such things and I would hope that it would be something related to that and not an interdepartmental committee or something.

Dr de Brouwer: It is not an interdepartmental committee.

Senator Conroy: It is a serious meeting.

Answer:

Notification that some senior witnesses would be unavailable, due to unavoidable meeting commitments, was passed by the Assistant Secretary of the Ministerial Support Division to the Committee Secretary by phone early on the afternoon of Friday 8 February 2013 and confirmed by email at 6.34pm the same day.

As advised on 11 February 2013, the unavoidable meeting commitments were for Cabinet level meetings (page 88 of the Hansard refers).