

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearings 2005-2006, 23 and 24 May 2005

Question: PM 11

Outcome 1, Output 4.3

Topic: ANAO Agency Budget

Hansard Page: F&PA 108

Senator Carr asked: But, given that the letter has been extensively reported on, can a copy of the letter (from the Auditor-General re agency budget) be tabled?

Answer: No. The letter to the Prime Minister discusses Budget proposals which are inherently confidential. While a copy of the letter was sent to the Chairman of the Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) in the light of that Committee's statutory responsibilities to consider, and make recommendations on, draft budget estimates for the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), it was provided and, it is understood, received, on a confidential basis. In these circumstances, the department (and the Auditor-General) consider it would be inappropriate to publish the letter more widely.

The JCPAA's statement on the ANAO's draft budget estimates, which summarises the ANAO's resource position, was tabled by the chair of the Committee on 10 May 2005.