

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 18

Outcome 1, Output 1

Topic: Beaudesert Rail

Hansard Page: F&PA 120:

Senator Carr asked: I have a series of questions that relate to evidence presented to a Senate committee concerning the Prime Minister's direct involvement in the offering of \$400,000 worth of grants. We have advice by way of correspondence that was sent from Ms Vicki Dickman of DOTARS to a person known as Joanne Dunne, concerning the loan application. It was dated 3 November 2003 and sent at 2:50pm.

It said: The timetable I outlined to you on Friday remains unchanged. We did have a thorough briefing session with the Deputy Prime Minister's office on Friday afternoon. As we anticipated, the Deputy Prime Minister's office is now liaising with the Prime Minister's office and we are expecting a decision late tomorrow.

An email sent at 3:00pm on that day said: I was just wondering if you had heard from the Prime Minister's office. We are waiting to hear from you tomorrow. If you could, let us know whether or not a decision has been made. My question went to whether or not the Prime Minister had offered this money and if so –

Senator Hill: The department can not answer that question.

Senator Carr: Why not?

Senator Hill: Because that is not the role of the department.

Senator Carr: I will ask a factual question of the Prime Minister.

Senator Hill: You can ask the Prime Minister. I would refer that to the Prime Minister. But you cannot ask the official that; you can ask him whether the department provided any advice.

Answer: The Prime Minister wrote on 11 June 2003 to the Member for Forde, Mrs Kay Elson MP, supporting the provision of a \$400,000 loan subject to certain conditions. The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon John Anderson MP, wrote on 5 November 2003 to KordaMentha, regarding the provision of a \$600,000 grant subject to certain conditions.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet provided advice to the Prime Minister on 11 June 2003 and 4 November 2003, as outlined in the response to PM 37 and in Hansard on F&PA page 14-18.