

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

Budget Estimates Hearing 26 May - 27 May 2008



Question: PM5

Outcome 1, Output 5.2

Topic: PM advising the Governor-General on dismissal of an executive councillor

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Senator Fifield asked: -Are there circumstances under which the Prime Minister would consider giving advice to the Governor-General that someone should be dismissed as an executive councillor, such as in the circumstance of an executive councillor who is no longer an office bearer or no longer in the parliament having been convicted?...

Senator Faulkner---... I cannot say to you, Senator, whether the current Prime Minister is thinking of a different approach. I cannot say that to you at this stage. Of course, if you wish me to, I can ask. I can take it on notice for you.

Senator FIFIELD-Thank you, Senator Faulkner?

Senator Faulkner-I am very happy to ask the Prime Minister if he intends to take a different approach on this to his predecessor, Mr Howard.

Senator FIFIELD-I would appreciate that. Thank you.

Answer: Appointments of Federal Executive Councillors are made or terminated by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister of the day. The only case of an Executive Councillor appointment having been terminated was that of Senator Glenister Shiel in 1977, on the advice of the then Prime Minister the Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser. That case was not related to a conviction.

The former Prime Minister did not recommend the termination of any Executive Councillor's appointment and it is not possible to say whether the current Prime Minister's approach would be any different.