

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: PM8

Outcome 1, Output 5.1

Topic: Charter Letters

Hansard Page: F&PA 82

Senator Fielding asked: Senator Faulkner-...I will need to check whether other ministers have received charter letters, but I do know that the Prime Minister has sat down with each and every one of his ministers and undertaken a similar process.

Senator FIELDING-Could you take that on notice then?

Senator Faulkner-I am happy to.

Answer: Over January and early February 2008, the Prime Minister conducted a series of meetings with each senior portfolio Minister and the Cabinet Secretary. These meetings were arranged as an opportunity, early in the life of the new Government, to discuss the Prime Minister's and Ministers' views on each portfolio's key objectives, priorities and performance measurement and reporting arrangements.

Notes were taken of some key points raised during discussions.

At the conclusion of these meetings, draft charter letters summarising each portfolio's priorities were prepared. Given the Prime Minister's decision that the distribution of charter letters was not necessary the draft letters were not finalised.

The manner in which successive governments have managed their priorities, including whether charter letters or other approaches are used, has changed from time to time. It is a longstanding convention before this Committee that the policy on how priorities are set by a Government, and the nature or content of those priorities, is not disclosed, to maintain Cabinet confidentiality.