

**Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2009**

**Department of Finance and Deregulation**

**Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**

**Outcome 3, Program 3.1**

**Topic: Senator McLucas' use of travelling allowance**

**Question reference number: F49 a-b**

**Type of Question: Hansard F&PA page 21 & 24, 28 May 2009**

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 July 2009**

**Number of Pages: 2**

**a) Senator Ronaldson asked:**

**Senator Faulkner**— ... What I am more than happy to do in this circumstance, given that you have widely canvassed this issue this morning, is ask the department to advise me on this matter further.

...

**Senator RONALDSON**—I appreciate your offer, but given the serious nature of these allegations why would it take two hours of examination in relation to this matter for you to ask the department to conduct an investigation?

**Answer:**

The Department of Finance and Deregulation will provide further advice to the Special Minister of State on this matter.

**b) Senator Ronaldson asked:**

**Senator RONALDSON**—What was the wording of your request, Minister?

**Senator Faulkner**—I asked the department if they would brief me on the circumstances surrounding the Senator McLucas matter. If you are going to ask me a follow-up question on whether I did this by formal memorandum, I believe not. I made my request through the appropriate channels.

**Senator RONALDSON**—When was that request made? That was made verbally, wasn't it?

**Senator Faulkner**—Senator, I do not have that date with me. I will try to provide that for you.

**Senator RONALDSON**—Who did you speak to?

**Senator Faulkner**—I made my request, as I do on these matters, through the departmental liaison officer. I will find the date for you.

**Senator RONALDSON**—So the departmental liaison officer spoke to someone in the department?

**Senator Faulkner**—It would be followed through in the normal course of events.

**Senator RONALDSON**—Who did the DLO speak to?

**Ms Mason**—Senator, we would have to take that on notice and check the audit trail on how that request came to us. But I can confirm that, before receiving a request from the minister to examine the matter, the department was already examining it.

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**Answer:**

The request for a brief was made by phone on 8 May 2009 by the Department of Finance and Deregulation's (Finance) Departmental Liaison Officer in the then Special Minister of State's office, on behalf of the then Special Minister of State, to a Principal Legal Officer in Finance's Legal Services Branch. That request was confirmed orally on 14 May 2009 by the same Departmental Liaison Officer to the Branch Manager in Finance's Legal Service Branch.