

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 Hearing 25-29 May 2009

Question: PM102a-d

Outcome 1, Output 5

Topic: PM's Trip to Afghanistan

Senator: Ronaldson

Type of Question: Written

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

Number of pages: 1

- a) **When former Prime Minister Howard visited Australian troops in Afghanistan, did he stay overnight in Tarin Kowt? If not, why not?**
- b) **What arrangements were made for the aircraft that transported Mr Howard to Tarin Kowt? Is it correct that the situation was deemed so dangerous that the RAAF transport aircraft on which he was travelling did not stay at Tarin Kowt, but flew to Kandahar to wait until it was time for him to depart on the same day?**
- c) **Is it the view of the Government that the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated substantially since the time that Mr Howard was in Afghanistan?**
- d) **Did the Office of the Governor General seek any advice from the office of the Prime Minister or the Department in relation to an overnight stay in Tarin Kowt by the current Governor General? If so, what was the nature of the advice provided?**

Answer:

- a) No. The proposed program could be completed within the course of one day.
- b) The aircraft remained at Tarin Kowt.
- c) The security situation in Afghanistan remains challenging and dangerous. The Prime Minister said publicly on 29 April 2009 that, if anything, security in Afghanistan had been deteriorating.
- d) No.