

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 24 May-3rd June 2010

Question: PM86

Topic: National Security Committee no show

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 July 2010

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The Australian reported: "Another example. A few weeks ago, Rudd called a meeting of the cabinet's National Security Committee. The most powerful federal bureaucrats, defence chiefs, diplomats and police gathered and waited for the Prime Minister. And waited and waited. Finally, after three hours, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's new head Dennis Richardson decided he couldn't wait any longer and stalked off. Oh, and Richardson also used the f-word to express his displeasure."

a) Can DPMC confirm that the Prime Minister did not attend scheduled National Security Council meeting in early April?

b) How many scheduled meetings of the National Security Council has the Prime Minister not attended?

Answer:

- a) The then Prime Minister was not absent from any scheduled National Security Committee meeting in early April 2010.
- b) During the term of the Rudd Government, the then Prime Minister was absent for seven meetings out of seventy one.