

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance and Deregulation

Outcome/Program: 3/3.1

Topic: Senator the Hon Bob Carr's electorate office

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: F49

Type of question: Hansard, F&PA Committee, page 9, 24 May 2012

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 6 July 2012

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator RYAN: I have got a historical company extract from ASIC here, dated 12 April this year. It lists as the principal place of business the company RJ Carr Pty Ltd, of whom Mr Carr was a previous director up until March this year, at Bligh House, level 10, 4-6 Bligh Street, Sydney, which, if I am correct, is the same office we have just been discussing. I understand that this was the place where Mr Carr previously undertook his business as a lobbyist. I am not sure about arrangements with the New South Wales government. I am not asking you to have any knowledge of those. If there was any business being conducted from this office—I am not saying there was—that would be a breach of entitlements—would it not?

Senator CHRIS EVANS: That is a hypothetical. You can ask the officers what the rules are regarding those things. It is fair to ask what the rules are regarding the use of offices. That is something they can answer.

Senator RYAN: The rules regarding the use of offices are that no business may be conducted from an electorate office—correct?

Ms Mason: We provide offices for parliamentary electorate and official business, not for commercial purposes.

Senator RYAN: Given that you are obviously aware that this was the previous office provided to Mr Carr, has the department at any time inquired as to whether the previous business arrangements had been finalised when it became a Commonwealth funded office?

Ms Mason: That is not within my knowledge. We would certainly need to check whether that was the case.

Senator RYAN: Will you now go back and look at, say, the ASIC records and determine whether what I have got that is dated April this year is still in place?

Ms Mason: We will certainly examine the matters that you have raised and see if there is any action that needs to be taken by the department.

Answer:

Finance is currently reviewing the use of the premises from the time it became the electorate office for Senator Carr, consistent with the Minchin protocol concerning alleged misuse of entitlements by Senators and Members of Parliament.