

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing 21-24 May 2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.1 Domestic Policy

Topic: Charter Letters

Senator: Senator Fifield

Question reference number: 2

Type of Question: FPA P73, 21 May 2012

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

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator FIFIELD: Thank you. Perhaps you can take it on notice, just in case between now and when the time for lodging of questions on notice happens, that if the charter letters happen to be signed and delivered in that time you could let us know. I assume that once they are signed and delivered that is something we could be told. Answer, 'Yes and we will take it on notice.' The answer to the question taken on notice is, 'The department is not able to provide any additional information.' Can I take it from that that the letter has not been signed and sent, that Mr Butler has not received a charter letter?

Senator Chris Evans: I do not think you could take that, Senator. I am not aware of that. I am happy to take it on notice for you. It has been the practice to issue charter letters to ministers in the past. As to whether that has occurred on this occasion, I would have to take it on notice; I do not know the answer.

Senator FIFIELD: Let me broaden the question, which might make it a little easier. Have any charter letters been sent to any ministers by the Prime Minister since the last reshuffle?

Senator Chris Evans: I will take that on notice. There is some sensitivity from officers about what should be disclosed in relation to charter letters.

Answer:

Yes.