

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: 1.1.2 National Security and International Policy

Topic: Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Australia - briefing to the PM

Senator: Senator Rhiannon

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Question:

Senator RHIANNON: Thank you for your response. The dates that you gave were all last year. You did say she was briefed on several occasions re this matter. I have provided information with the direct quotes from the Sri Lankan government's own Commission of Inquiry into Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation, and also the report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on accountability in Sri Lanka. I understand that both those reports have become publicly available since the last briefing the Prime Minister was given in 2011. Considering these developments, do you have plans to give the Prime Minister a further briefing about this information?

Ms Tsirbas: My information is that the sources of information that were drawn upon in briefing the Prime Minister included the UN Secretary-General's Panel of Experts report, which made no reference to Admiral Samarasinghe; however, the question of whether reference was made to the other report that you mentioned, I will have to take on notice.

Senator RHIANNON: I still find it unclear. Considering the UN report came out before the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation report, surely the Prime Minister would need to be updated on the latest information, which actually comes from the Sri Lankan government itself.

Ms Tsirbas: I will take that question on notice as to whether that report was specifically referred to.

Answer:

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has not provided briefing to the Prime Minister on the content of the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission report.