

**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:** PNG policy - comments made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Senator:** Senator Ryan

**Question reference number:** 29

**Type of Question:** FPA P12- 13, 22 May 2012

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

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

Senator RYAN: The current one! Number three. Minister, did Senator Carr's warning to PNG that it could face sanctions if elections were delayed reflect the Australian government's policy with respect to PNG?

Senator RYAN: I am after the view of the Prime Minister about Australian government policy with respect to PNG.

Senator Chris Evans: I am happy to take that on notice if that is what you are after. All I am saying is that I do not have any briefing that goes to that question. It is primarily a question for Foreign Affairs. If the Prime Minister has anything to say in addition to the advice you will get from Foreign Affairs, I am happy to take that on notice.

Senator RYAN: I would also be interested in and I appreciate that the content of certain discussions may not be able to be released any contact between the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade immediately subsequent to the comments by Senator Carr and what you have very charitably described as his "explanation" of them, which others may describe as a correction or partial withdrawal of them. It represented a change or an important statement on Australian government policy. Obviously the international branch of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet would have a view on what that is.

**Answer:** Yes.