

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 Supplementary Hearings 2002-2003, 20 November 2002

Question: PM 3

Outcome 1, Output 4

Topic: Parliamentary Question asked of all ministers regarding mobile phones allocated to the portfolios minister's, parliamentary secretaries, MoPs Act Staff and DLO's

Hansard Page/ Direct on Notice: F&PA 114

Senator Ray asked: Why was the instruction given to tell DOFA not to forward the response to Senator Abetz's Office (QON re mobile phones given to ministerial staff).

Answer: It is the normal responsibility of Prime Minister and Cabinet, being the key central agency and the Prime Minister's own department, to provide advice as appropriate to departments on the handling of cross portfolio or whole of government matters and to undertake any necessary coordination.

Following consultations with the Prime Minister's Office, all departments were informed on 31 July 2002, "that the Special Minister of State (SMOS) would be responding on behalf of all ministers", and that "at this stage, contributions would not be required from other departments".

The SMOS was judged the Minister best placed to consider a whole of government position, given his responsibility for the administration of senators and members' entitlements.

It was envisaged that information would be sought from departments as required and in the form most appropriate for a whole of government response.