



Australian Government

Department of Finance and Administration

Reference: PIG06/02025-4
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Mr Alistair Sands
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Finance
and Public Administration
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Sands

Senate Estimates Hearing of 31 October 2006

I am writing to you to in relation to evidence provided by officers from Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS) during the appearance of the Department of Finance and Administration at the 31 October 2006 Supplementary Budget Estimates hearings of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration.

Following the hearings, officers from M&PS who appeared before the Committee have read the proof copy of Hansard and also checked relevant records held within the Department. We would like to make some corrections to the evidence and also provide the Committee with additional information, as detailed below.

Evidence of Mr Greg Miles

Correction of evidence

At Hansard page F&PA 42 Senator Parry asked Mr Miles “*Are you aware of any complaints from any senators or members over the last three financial years about the inadequacy of the travel entitlement for staff?*”. Mr Miles replied “*Not any particular complaints*”.

Following the hearing, it was brought to Mr Miles’ attention that, from time to time, Senators and Members, or staff acting on their behalf, have contacted M&PS expressing concern about difficulties they are having managing the staff travel budget.

The M&PS Call Register shows that Senator Parry's staff made such contact with M&PS on 31 May 2006 and M&PS officers subsequently discussed the matter with Senator Parry on 14 June 2006.

Evidence of Ms Kim Clarke

Correction of evidence

At Hansard page F&PA 32 in response to an earlier question from Senator Ray concerning the Employee Consultative Group (ECG) Ms Clarke stated "*The difference between the representatives on the EGC and the SRG is that there is one Democrat on the EGC. The membership of that I will reiterate. It is four Liberal Party representatives, three Labor Party representatives, two National Party representatives, one Democrat representative and one representative of independent senators and members*".

Following the hearing, however, it was brought to Ms Clarke's attention that the representation on the ECG was altered following the swearing in of new Senators on 1 July 2005. In October 2005, representation on the ECG changes so that staff of the Australian Democrats were represented by the independent representative on the ECG. This reduced the number of members on the ECG from 11 to 10.

Clarification of evidence

At Hansard page F&PA 51, in response to questions from Senator Ray and Senator Faulkner concerning the provision of mobile phones to Senator Boswell, Ms Clarke stated "*.....- one is for the electorate and one is for personal use -.....*".

All Senators and Members, including Senator Boswell, are entitled to two mobile phones. These are provided under Item 7, Part 1, Schedule 1 to the *Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990*. One of these mobile phones is for use by Senator Boswell personally and the other is for electorate office use.

Additional information

At Hansard page F&PA 63, in response to a question from Senator Ray concerning information requested by the office of the Special Minister of State for briefing of coalition staff, Ms Clarke stated "*They come in as routine questions. They were not prefaced with: 'I'm using this information for this purpose.' It was-*".

Following the hearing however, the Call Register in M&PS has been checked and shows that, on 19 October 2006, the office of the Special Minister of State requested the provision of information on overtime payments. The call register records that the office of the Special Minister of State indicated "*there is a CA meeting today*". The requested information, however, could not be provided until 20 October 2006.

I would appreciate it if you could bring these matters to the attention of the Committee.

Should you require any further information in relation to this matter please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 6215 3504.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the left.

Jan Mason
General Manager
Ministerial and Parliamentary Services

3 November 2006