

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

**Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing – October 2008
Medibank Private Limited**



Topic: Medibank Private Limited

Question reference number: F51a-1

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 5 December 2008

Number of Pages: 2

Senator Cormann asked:

- a) Will you confirm Hawker Britton's entry on the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Register of Lobbyists that shows that Medibank Private is a client of Hawker Britton?
- b) When was Hawker Britton engaged?
- c) Was the decision approved by the Board?
- d) If engaged before the election, did Hawker Britton assist Medibank Private to gain access to the then Leader of the Opposition, the shadow minister for Health, other senior shadow ministers and their offices?
- e) Since the November 2007 Federal election, has Hawker Britton assisted Medibank Private gain access to the PM, the Minister for Health, other senior ministers and their offices?
- f) Why does a Government owned health fund need to contract Labor Party aligned external political lobbyists to get access to the Federal Government?
- g) Did Medibank Private contract external political lobbyists to manage its relations with the Howard Government?
- h) What is the term of the contract with Hawker Britton? Is it a flat retainer, fee for service or combination of both?
- i) When does the Hawker Britton contract expire?
- j) Who is Hawker Britton's account manager for Medibank?
- k) In presenting Medibank Private and the PHI industry's case on the Medicare Levy Surcharge changes, what role did Hawker Britton play in developing strategy and opening doors?
- l) Did Medibank Private engage a lobbyist or lobby firm to represent it in its dealings with the former government? If not (we know it didn't), why not?

Answer:

- a) Yes.
- b) March 2008.
- c) The decision to engage Hawker Britton was an operational issue and therefore did not require approval from the Board.
- d) Hawker Britton was not engaged before the 2007 election.
- e) Hawker Britton supplies the Strategy and Corporate Affairs Division of Medibank Private Limited (MPL) with strategic advice. MPL does not use Hawker Britton to gain access to ministers or their officers.
- f) MPL does not contract external political lobbyists to get access to the Federal Government. MPL works in a highly competitive commercial environment

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that requires strategic advice to achieve its objectives and has from time to time used external consultants to assist with this advice.

- g) MPL uses consultants to provide strategic advice as it did during the term of the previous government. MPL does not use consultants to gain access to ministers or their officers, and did not for the previous government.
- h) The contract with Hawker Britten is a month to month contract with a monthly retainer, for the term of the project.
- i) See answer h).
- j) Mr Craig Bosworth, Public and Industry Affairs Manager.
- k) Hawker Britton had no involvement in presenting MPL's case on the Medicare Levy Surcharge changes.
- l) See answer g).