

**Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 20 - 23 Oct 2008**



**Question: PM1**

**Outcome 1, Output 5**

**Topic: Which governments have not used charter letters**

**Hansard Page: F&PA 25**

**Senator Abetz asked: First of all, I refer you to the answer given to question PM8, a question by Senator Fielding. In the answer we were told:**

**The manner in which successive governments have managed their priorities, including whether charter letters or other approaches are used, has changed from time to time.**

**I was just wondering if you could tell us which governments in recent history have not used charter letters, other than the Rudd government...If it could be taken on notice and the committee could be provided with details as to what the exact arrangements were with the Fraser government, the Hawke government, the Keating government and the Howard government, that would be most instructive. I assume officers do not have that with them at the moment.**

**Senator Faulkner-I am not sure that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet would necessarily have that information available, but what I am happy to do is certainly to ask them to check for you. Any information that we do have available and can assist you with, obviously, we will provide.**

**Senator ABETZ-Thank you.**

**Answer: The practice of writing to all ministers on appointment, outlining priorities for portfolios, began with the Hawke Government. This practice continued through the Keating Government and into the Howard Government. However, the precise manner in which successive governments have managed its priorities has changed from time to time. In 2007 the Howard Government began using a Cabinet process rather than correspondence to communicate its priorities to ministers.**