

**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: PM16**

**Outcome 1, Output 5**

**Topic: Cult activity**

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**Senator Boyce asked: This is a couple of questions and I suspect I may not have much more success than Senator Boswell but I do not know where else to ask these questions. Senator Faulkner, I am sure that, like me, you receive quite a lot of correspondence from people about cult activity, with families being split apart by it...**

**Senator Faulkner-One thing I have always found with PM&C is that, if you take an issue to them, they will find the right place to go, but whether they are the right place is a very different issue. I do not know if Mr Mrdak can help us there.**

**Mr Mrdak-I am not familiar with representations or issues being raised in our portfolio but, if I can, I will take that on notice and come back to you about which portfolio within the Commonwealth it should be raised. It may well sit in the Attorney-General department. I will take that on notice and come back to you...In the first instance, I will endeavour, during the break for afternoon tea, to identify which area of the Commonwealth deals with these issues more regularly and try to get you that answer quickly. Subsequent to that, on notice, I will try to give you a more detailed answer in relation to how these questions are being dealt with.**

**Answer: Depending on the definition of "cult activity", correspondence may raise a range of social issues that are not necessarily Commonwealth responsibilities, or the subject of regulation or government programs. Any allegations of criminal activity would be likely to raise state or territory matters; however, matters of family law are best directed to the Attorney-General's Department.**