

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 18-21 October 2010**

**Question: PM16**

**Asked By: Senator Abetz**

**Topic: Agreement with the Greens**

**Type of Question: FPA 59, 18 October**

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 3 December 2010**

**Number of pages: 2**

**Senator ABETZ-I would be interested in the PMO's interpretation of the document, which deals with the working relationship in section 5, where it talks about when the parliament is in session, the Prime Minister- which could, under your regime, be anybody tomorrow-that was a flippant comment, but it talks about the Prime Minister as a position-**

**Senator Chris Evans-Given the number of times you have changed opposition leader, Senator, I hardly think it is one you would want to make.**

**Senator ABETZ-whereas it does not refer to the leader of the Australian Greens, but specifically refers to Senator Brown, which would suggest, irrespective of Senator Brown's status as leader or not leader of the Australian Greens, it is an agreement that has been struck with Senator Brown on a personal basis, as opposed to his leadership position. So Ms Gillard is described as the Prime Minister throughout; Senator Brown is not described as the leader of the Australian Greens. I am just wondering whether any legal advice has been sought as to what that actually means in relation to this agreement, as to whether it is Senator Brown specific, or Australian Greens? leader specific.**

**Senator Chris Evans-My understanding was that Senator Brown was acting with the authority and on behalf of the Federal parliamentary Greens, but I will certainly take on notice the point you raise. I do not know if anything turns on it, but I will make the inquiry and take the question on notice.**

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**Senator ABETZ-It just seems that throughout especially section 5, it is always Prime Minister or Prime Minister's Office, whereas, for the Greens, it is always Senator Brown or Senator Brown's office. There does seem to be some difference in description there.**

**Answer:**

The answer to the Honourable Senator's question is that legal advice has not been sought.