

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: PM88

Asked By: Senator Abetz

Topic: Briefing requests to PM and C during caretaker period

Type of Question: Written

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

Number of pages:

- (a) What contact was there between PM&C and the caretaker Prime Minister's Office during the period between the election and the formation of the government?**
- (b) How many written briefs were provided to the Prime Minister in that period?**
- (c) Was less formal oral advice provided to the Prime Minister in that period?**
- (d) On what sort of subjects?**
- (e) Can you assure me that the advice provided was only factual or policy advice that related to urgent issues consistent with clause 6.5 of Conventions?**
- (f) Was any advice provided on the operation of a hung parliament? Was that within the guidelines?**
- (g) Was any advice provided on issues the Independents were raising in their negotiations with the Labor Party?**
- (h) Was advice provided to the PM in that period on any of the following issues:-**
 - i. Regional health funding**
 - ii. NBN**
 - iii. Parliamentary reform**

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- iv. Regional higher education funding**
- v. Costings of election policies**
- vi. Road funding**
- vii. Funding for electricity transmission**
- viii. Competition policy as it related to supermarkets**
- ix. Defence procurement**

Answer:

(a) What contact was there between PM&C and the caretaker Prime Minister's Office during the period between the election and the formation of the government?

a) Consistent with the *Caretaker Conventions*, there was ongoing contact by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) in relation to the ongoing administration of government.

(b) How many written briefs were provided to the Prime Minister in that period?

b) 37

(c) Was less formal oral advice provided to the Prime Minister in that period?

c) Yes

(d) On what sort of subjects?

d) In its role in supporting the Prime Minister, the department provided advice on government administration consistent with the *Caretaker Conventions* and the *Guidelines for Post-Election Consultations with Independent Members* issued in August 2010.

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(e) Can you assure me that the advice provided was only factual or policy advice that related to urgent issues consistent with clause 6.5 of Conventions?

e) Yes, the department operated in a manner that was consistent with clause 6.5 of the *Caretaker Conventions* and the *Guidelines for Post-Election Consultations with Independent Members* issued in August 2010.

(f) Was any advice provided on the operation of a hung parliament? Was that within the guidelines?

f) No advice was provided on the operation of a hung parliament.

(g) Was any advice provided on issues the Independents were raising in their negotiations with the Labor Party?

g) Consistent with clause 5 of the *Guidelines for Post-Election Consultations with Independent Members* issued in August 2010, the department briefed the Government and the Opposition.

(h) Was advice provided to the PM in that period on any of the following issues:-

i. Regional health funding

ii. NBN

iii. Parliamentary reform

iv. Regional higher education funding

v. Costings of election policies

vi. Road funding

vii. Funding for electricity transmission

viii. Competition policy as it related to supermarkets

ix. Defence procurement

h) i. to ix. inclusive: No individual briefs on these issues were provided.