

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARINGS

PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET PORTFOLIO

Department/Agency: Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government

Outcome: 1

Topic: QoN submitted prior to 21 July

Senator: MACDONALD

Question reference number: 3b

Type of question: Hansard F&A page 26-27, Tuesday 19 October 2010

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

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Minister, do you have any idea why they would not have been dealt with prior to 21 July, well before the election?

Senator Sherry—I think Ms Beauchamp has indicated there were issues surrounding the transition.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—This is before the election.

Senator Sherry—I accept that. I am going to get to that. There have been issues around the transition and the status of the committee et cetera. She has put that on the public record. I would have to take that on notice as well, Senator Macdonald. This is a first for me. I have not represented this department at estimates before so I have not been at previous estimates for the issues that you are raising and where the questions on notice were taken. Otherwise I might have a greater personal knowledge, but I do not, unfortunately. But I will take it on notice, as Ms Beauchamp has. I will attempt to ascertain from the ministerial officers why there has been a delay. I do not believe it is satisfactory that there has been a delay, because I have sat where you sit. I do not accept your critique that you made earlier that this government has the worst record. I think if we were to look at the various records, responses to questions on notice and time frames of each committee over this government and previous governments, I would not accept that we had been worse than the previous government. But I will take it on notice, Senator Macdonald, and I will endeavour to find out, as also Ms Beauchamp has indicated, some specific time frames and reasons for those questions not having been provided. I do not believe it is satisfactory that the questions have not been provided, but I do not believe it is reasonable that Ms Beauchamp, given she is a new appointment—

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Answer:

In the May 2010 Senate Estimates period the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (DITRDLG) received 211 questions on notice: of these, 29 questions related to programs that are now the responsibility of the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government (Regional Australia). DITRDLG submitted answers to all 211 questions to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government prior to 21 July 2010.