

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Supplementary Budget Estimates 17-20 October 2011

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Outcome/Program:** 1.1.4 Support Services for Government Operations

**Topic:** PMO communications director - Vacancy date

**Senator:** Senator Abetz

**Question reference number:** 22

**Type of Question:** FPA, p 75, 17 October

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 2 December 2011

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

Senator Chris Evans: I am happy to take it on notice. I am not sure that I would be answering questions regarding discussions between ministers or their officers, but I am happy to take the question on notice. Senator Ronaldson has just ducked out but he asked a question earlier and made the suggestion that perhaps there had been a new position created that Mr McTernan was taking up as Director of Communications. I just want to put on the record that there is an existing job of Director of Communications which he has been appointed. At this time there is an acting director - so he will take up an established position.

Senator ABETZ: So what is the acting director going to do?

Senator Chris Evans: I do not have that level of detail. As I understand it, there was someone from inside the office who was acting in the role and will revert, no doubt, to their other role.

Senator ABETZ: Could you take on notice when the role became vacant?

Senator Chris Evans: Yes. The key point is that the suggestion was made that there was a new job being created -and that is not right. Mr McTernan is being appointed to an existing office.

Senator ABETZ: Or clearly somebody has left and a replacement appointed.

**Answer:**

The permanent role became vacant on 5 August 2011.