

# 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:** 1.1.2 National Security and International Policy

**Topic:** Sri Lankan High Commissioner - Advice provided before appointment

**Senator:** Senator Rhiannon

**Question reference number:** 27

**Type of Question:** FPA, p 81, 17 October

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

**Number of pages:** 1

### Question:

Senator RHIANNON: I appreciate that, but I guess I do want to understand the generalities to understand how the current situation may have unfolded.

I would like to now move to the current situation. There was a report on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald today with regard to the current Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Australia. These allegations are now the subject of a submission from the International Commission of Jurists-Australian Section, and of the Federal Police. Those allegations had been made prior to the appointment. So I wish to understand what attention the department gave to this matter, considering it has been in the public domain for a long period, and what advice was provided to the Prime Minister.

Dr McCarthy: I can say that advice on that matter was provided, but we obviously do not go into the question of the advice that was provided.

Senator RHIANNON: So the advice was provided prior to the current Sri Lankan High Commissioner taking up the post?

[...]

Senator RHIANNON: I just want to get the time right. That was prior to the acceptance of the current Sri Lankan high commissioner in that role?

Dr McCarthy: I will take on notice questions about timing.

### Answer:

The Department provided advice to the Prime Minister on 28 March 2011 about the proposed appointment of the current High Commissioner for Sri Lanka. This advice was provided before the High Commissioner took up his post.