

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government

Supplementary Budget Estimates 17-20 October 2011

Question: 17

Topic: Appointment of Mr Zahra to Independent Advisory Panel

Asked By: Senator MACDONALD

Type of Question: Hansard F&PA 131

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

Number of pages: 2

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Okay. Time is short, so nothing is on the table. Could we go back to Mr Zahra and his qualifications?

Mr O'Brien: He was obviously a federal member of parliament in Latrobe Valley. Prior to that he was chief executive officer of the Aboriginal Health and Housing Service in Gippsland. He has worked as a director for the Victorian Energy Networks Corporation and chair of the Victorian Sustainable Timber Industry Council.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: That is his CV. Can someone tell me what skill—

Senator Sherry: It was a ministerial appointment—

Mr O'Brien: It was certainly a ministerial appointment—

Senator Sherry: So I can refer it on to the minister and take it on notice, but a number of the attributes in the CV obviously relate to regional matters. Beyond that I will have to take it on notice.

Answer:

Mr Christian Zahra FAICD is a well-known and strong advocate for regional Australia. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and holds a Bachelor of Economics from La Trobe University and a Master of Assessment and Evaluation from the University of Melbourne.

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Mr Zahra brings experience in social inclusion, government programs, and large infrastructure to the role of Chair. He has served as a Director of the Victorian Energy Networks Corporation, Chair of the Victorian Government's Sustainable Timber Industry Council and CEO of an Aboriginal Health and Housing service in Gippsland. He is a director of the Mary MacKillop Foundation. From 1998 to 2004, Mr Zahra represented the Federal electorate of McMillan in regional Victoria.

Mr Zahra was recently appointed Executive Director of Pacific Strategy Partners.