

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 15-18 October 2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.2 Official and Ceremonial Support

Topic: Diamond Jubilee Medal

Senator: Senator the Hon Faulkner

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Question:

Senator FAULKNER: I asked the Office of the Governor-General about finalising the issue of the diamond jubilee medal. Can anyone assist as to whether, at the end of the day, any of those were awarded? If it is a problem now, we will come back to it later.

Ms Leon: The Australian government decided not to issue a diamond jubilee medal. The Queen, in accordance with previous practice, did approve the awarding of the UK diamond jubilee medal to the two living holders of the Victoria Cross and George Cross, the two living recipients of the Victoria Cross for Australia and the five living recipients of the Cross of Valour. Three of those medals were presented by the Prince of Wales in London in May this year—that was to the Victoria Cross recipient, Keith Payne, to one of the two Victoria Cross for Australia recipients, Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith, and to the George Cross recipient, Michael Pratt.

Senator FAULKNER: Yes, that is what I thought. I thought there may have been some information provided to the Governor-General's office in relation to the awarding of those medals. That is the reason I followed that up with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. I was aware that that had occurred and could not quite understand why the Governor-General's office had not been informed by the palace. You cannot assist us with that, I suppose?

Ms Leon: I will see if there is any officer here who can cast some light on that.

Senator FAULKNER: It is a minor matter. We can deal with it later.

Ms Leon: Because the awards are UK awards and not awards in the Australian honours system, the Governor-General of Australia has no role in relation to them.

Senator FAULKNER: Can you just take on notice for me whether the same approach was taken in relation to other Commonwealth countries and, if so, which ones they were?

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Ms Leon: To the extent that we can find that out, I will do that.

Answer:

Her Majesty The Queen approved, as awards in her personal gift, awards of the Diamond Jubilee Medal to holders of Level 1 Gallantry Awards in Australia and New Zealand (the Victoria Cross, George Cross and national equivalents). No other Commonwealth Realm participated in the award of the British Diamond Jubilee Medal. Canada and the Caribbean Realms instituted their own Medals.