

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013-2014

Finance Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance
Outcome/Program: General
Topic: Coalition Advisory Service

Senator: Faulkner, Bernardi and McKenzie

Question reference number: F33

Type of question: Hansard. F&P Committee, Pages 107-113, 19 November 2013.

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 17 January 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator FAULKNER: Could someone confirm that the latest incarnation of the CCSTU and CCT under the new government is the Coalition Advisory Service?

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Senator FAULKNER: Okay. So, can you please provide, on notice, a list of the consumables provided and the amounts of those consumables provided to the coalition advisory service? Is there is a finance budget in relation to the services that Finance provides to the coalition advisory service? Or, how much are you expecting to fork out?

Mr Tune: We are not sure about that, Senator. We will have to take that one on notice I am afraid.

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Senator FAULKNER: Okay. Well, if it could be provided, please, as soon as you are able, I would appreciate it. Is this group producing newsletters and the like, Minister?

Senator Ronaldson: I would have to take that on notice.

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Senator FAULKNER: Given that the coalition advisory service is the responsibility of Mr Ruddock, the Chief Government Whip, what, if any—and you might want to take this on notice; I am happy with that—were the travel protocols? Were they identical to electorate staff or whip staff? In fact, I would just like to know what they are.

Ms Moy: I will have to take that on notice.

Senator FAULKNER: They are obviously not the same as ministerial staff, are they?

Ms Moy: No, I would think not, but I will have to take that on notice just to make sure we give you the correct—

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Senator FAULKNER: I would expect so too, and I will be checking. Also, as you check home bases—I stress again that I do not want names—again we have an issue in relation to Mr Ruddock being the employing parliamentarian. I am not sure what this means for security clearances, but please indicate the relevant staff, but unnamed. I do not want them named, just an indication of the security clearances for those who have them.

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CHAIR: On that, I am actually interested in the answer to that, so, for my benefit, would you provide a comparison between the home-base details of the former government and the current government

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Senator McKENZIE: Could we also include in that a comparison of the amount of money spent on consumables for the former government's group and what is budgeted for this group, please.

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Senator FAULKNER: I am just interested in what is happening now. Is there any protocol, Minister, in relation to the conduct of research by the coalition advisory service?

Senator Ronaldson: I will take that on notice.

Answer:

Consumables and the budget for the Coalition Advisory Service (CAS)

Refer to the response to Question F50.

Production of newsletters

This is a matter for the Chief Government Whip in the House of Representatives.

Travel Protocols for CAS employees

In accordance with Ministerial Determination 2011/10: Determination Regarding Staff Travel Arrangements, all personal employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business.

Work Base Arrangements

All current CAS staff have a work base of Canberra.

At the dissolution of the Parliament on 5 August 2013 the Caucus Communications Team (CCT) had the following work bases:

- Canberra – 3 employees
- Sydney – 3 employees
- Melbourne – 2 employees
- Brisbane – 2 employees

Security Clearances

CAS employees are not required to obtain a security clearance as a condition of their employment. Finance has no knowledge of security clearances that employees may previously have obtained.

Comparison of the money spent on consumables for the Caucus Communications Support and Training Unit and the CCT and the budget for the CAS.

Costs for the CAS are part of the overall budget for home department services provided to the Finance portfolio ministers.

Protocols for the conduct of research by the CAS

This is a matter for the Chief Government Whip in the House of Representatives.