

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 173

**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates

**Outcome:** Corporate

**Programme:** Policy and Communications Division

**Topic:** Department Staff Seconded to the MO/PSO

**Hansard Page:** 9

**Question Date:** 18 November 2013

**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Pratt asked:**

Senator PRATT: I will follow that up. Have any departmental officers been seconded to the minister's office or the office of the parliamentary secretary? If so, what are the details of those appointments and how were they made? Are they temporary or permanent and are they on the payroll of the minister or the department?

Mr de Brouwer: I will pass to Ms Carlos, but it is a very normal practice with any government at the start of a term that there are departmental officials placed in offices.

Senator PRATT: I understand that.

Mr de Brouwer: That is a normal and standard and, in fact, a welcome and strong practice within government in Australia. I will come back with the specific details of that.

Ms Carlos: I understand that a number of staff have been up in the minister's office on a temporary basis. As is the usual practice for temporary basis, we pay them in the department, but I think we can provide you with more detailed information on notice.

Senator PRATT: Would you take on notice, please, what the definition of temporary is. Thank you.

**Answer:**

A number of Departmental officers were temporarily seconded to office of the Minister for the Environment during the transition to government period while the Minister was undertaking recruitment of staff. The seconded officers undertook administrative tasks and policy advisory work. They were paid by the Department. All secondments were consistent with the Australian Public Service Commission's guidelines as set out in its publication: *APS Values and Code of Conduct in Practice: A guide to official conduct for APS employees and agency heads*.