

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

Question No: 180

Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates

Outcome: Corporate

Programme: Policy and Communications Division

Topic: Portfolio Wide – Briefings for Other Parties – Independents

Hansard Page: N/A

Question Date: 27 November 2013

Question Type: Written

Senator Ludwig asked:

Have any briefings and/or provision of information been provided to Independents? If yes, please include:

- a) How are briefings requests commissioned?
- b) What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
- c) Provide details of what information has been provided and a copy of the information.
- d) Have any briefings request been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details of what the requests were and why it could not proceed.
- e) How long is spent preparing and undertaking briefings/information requests for the Independents? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.
- f) Which Independents have requested briefings and/or information?

Answer:

The Department of the Environment

Yes. Briefing or information has been provided to Independents on two occasions.

Bioregional Assessment Methodology meeting – Office of Water Science

- a) The briefing was requested through the office of the then Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.
- b) On 31 May 2013, a verbal overview of the Bioregional Assessment Methodology was provided to Mr John Clements, Chief of Staff to the then Member for New England, Mr Tony Windsor MP.
- c) The briefing was verbal only.
- d) No
- e) Preparation time involved approximately one hour for one First Assistant Secretary and one hour for one Executive Level 2 officer. Undertaking the briefing required around 45 minutes for one First Assistant Secretary and one Executive Level 2 officer.

- f) The Office of the then Member for New England, Mr Tony Windsor MP, requested the briefing.

Australian Antarctic Cargo and Quarantine Hub, Kingston, Tasmania – Australian Antarctic Division

- a) The request came from the Parliamentary Friendship Group, the Parliamentary Antarctic Alliance, and was agreed by the then Minister's Office.

Parliamentary Friendship Groups are groups formally recognised by the Presiding Officers. Recognition only lasts for the term of the relevant Parliament. The Parliamentary Antarctic Alliance was a bipartisan association of Members and Senators. The group's aim was to monitor issues relating to Antarctica and the Antarctic related work of Parliamentary committees. The group had a particular focus on Antarctic related economic and research opportunities for Tasmania. Most group members were Tasmanian MPs and Senators who were interested in maintaining Tasmania as the 'Gateway to the Antarctic'.

- b) On 31 July 2013 the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) provided a tour and verbal briefing on the new AAD Cargo and Quarantine Hub followed by a meeting of the group at the Division's Kingston site.
- c) The presentation was verbal only.
- d) No.
- e) No formal preparation time was involved. Presentation involved one First Assistant Secretary for 30 minutes, one Assistant Secretary for 30 minutes and one EL2 officer for 20 minutes.
- f) The Member for Denison, Mr Andrew Wilkie MP, attended as a member of the Parliamentary Friendship Group.

The Clean Energy Regulator

The Clean Energy Regulator responds to requests for information from Independents at the request of the Minister, as it does for any other members of Parliament. Briefings are generally provided orally on a range of issues. Any briefings provided are incorporated into the general work of the relevant areas of the Clean Energy Regulator and not separately identified.