

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2010

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 2, Program 2.3

Topic: Exemption

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Senator Ronaldson asked:

I remember that Mr Tune gave evidence. He may well want to send a letter for clarification in as well, but, when Senator Ryan put the proposition to Mr Tune that Dr Hawke might be sitting there watching TV before he knew about the exemptions, Mr Tune was very quick to indicate to the committee that that simply would not be the position and that, once the decision had been made, the minister would contact the chair of the ICC in a short space of time. So is that another matter that requires clarification?

Ms Mason—We will check that evidence, but it is not a lengthy period between the signing of the letter on 24 May and the department's becoming aware that the letter had been signed. It is not uncommon for documents to take a day or two to get back to the department, so that is not remarkable. Mr Grant's advising Dr Hawke about the existence of the letter on 27 May was again very promptly done, and then the tabling took place very shortly thereafter.

Answer:

In evidence to the Committee on 27 May 2010, the Secretary of Finance and Deregulation indicated that as a matter of due process, the Independent Communications Committee (ICC) would be informed of an exemption before a campaign was launched. The ICC was informed of the exemption for the Tax Reform advertising campaign prior to its launch.