



Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

ONE NATIONAL CIRCUIT
BARTON

Ms Ann Palmer
Committee Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Palmer

I wish to advise of the following corrections and clarifications to the record in relation to evidence provided at the Budget Estimates hearings on 21, 22 and 25 May 2018, regarding the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio.

Monday 21 May 2018

Nil

Tuesday 22 May 2018

1. Page 41

Mr McKinnon: It's to do with complexity. We're not actually drafting the rules; the Commonwealth parliamentary office's **Office of Parliamentary Counsel's** drafters do it...

2. Page 61

Senator KITCHING: Are you able to give us the total number of submissions received by the panel?

Mr Walter: I can, yes. The final total we've settled on—and I can explain my language on that—is ~~15,296~~ **15,695** submissions. Last time I was here I mentioned that we'd received in excess of 16,000. Technically, we did; however, it turned out that a large number of them were duplicates or in some instances blanks. So the figure that we've kind of settled on is ~~15,296~~ **15,695**.

Senator KITCHING: Were some longer form submissions and some sort of campaign or proforma submissions? Do you have a breakdown of where the ~~15,296~~ **15,695** sort of fall?

Mr Walter: There was considerable variation—from some that literally went for a couple of lines to ones that literally went for hundreds of pages. There is considerable variation in there. Your kind of average submission—if you just clicked on one—is usually about one or two pages long. They are the vast majority.

We received approximately—and it's a little bit hard to get this exactly right—2,500 of what we called substantially similar submissions. They're basically within 75 to 100 words of other submissions. They're all grouped together. You might call those campaigns. The biggest one of those was from the Australian Christian Lobby. There were ~~over~~ **around** 2,000 letters that were generated from their website. There were a couple of others in groups. We've got them on the

website. We grouped those ones together when we published them so that you can see that they're all substantially the same, and then the other ones are kind of individual.

There is another one that I might mention. We counted as one submission a petition from just.equal. That had 5,428 signatures attached to it. It's one physical submission and we only counted it as one physical submission, but it does have a large number of names attached to it.

Senator KITCHING: Were all the submissions published online?

Mr Walter: No. We published ~~8,468~~ **8,420** submissions. The panel made the decision to publish all submissions where it had the consent of the author and there was no other reason not to publish—that is, there was basically no legal risk associated with publishing a submission. So we published ~~8,468~~ **8,420**. We did not have consent to publish ~~6,763~~ **7,210** submissions, so we didn't. Then we did not publish 65 for a variety of reasons but mainly because of concerns about legal risk. As long as my maths is correct, that should come to ~~15,296~~ **15,695**.

Clarification: Submission numbers given were the best available at the time of the hearing. More accurate figures have since become available. The key reason for the increase is that the numbers given at the hearing did not include the submissions that arrived by post.

3. Page 62

Mr Walter: As at 30 April, which is the latest figure I've got, we are currently at \$505,540. The budget for the whole process is ~~\$1.22~~ **\$1.043** million. It will go up, obviously, from then but it won't be a substantial amount. I expect it will come in around the \$600,000 mark overall. We had a couple of costs this month because we had a few more legal costs, but I'd imagine it will be about that—a few hundred thousand under budget.

Senator KITCHING: Is it possible to get a breakdown of the costs along the lines of administrative and staff fees, sitting fees for the panel members, travel fees for the panel members, secretariat travel costs, entertainment and hospitality and consultant fees? Were there consultant fees?

Mr Walter: ~~Yes~~ **No**, we did have a data consultant **analyst** who we used **engaged as a contractor**.

4. Page 68-69

Mr McKinnon: Chair, before we go on, I want to make sure that I gave the correct numbers to Senator McAllister for the number of recommendations of the Independent Intelligence Review. I think I did. There are 23 headings of recommendations and, depending upon whether you count the classified or the unclassified, there are 75 or, with the ~~unclassified~~ **classified**, 77 recommendations, including sub-recommendations.

5. Page 77

Senator KITCHING: How much does Prime Minister Turnbull require his ministers to contribute towards the cost of catering for cabinet meetings?

Ms Cass: This arrangement ceased in ~~September 2015~~ **August 2013**.

6. Page 76-78

Senator KITCHING: I understand that asking ministers to contribute towards the cost of cabinet catering has reflected a long-standing practice that was followed by previous governments, including the Howard government, is that correct?

Ms Cass: I believe it was a practice. I believe it ceased in September of 2015.

Senator KITCHING: What was the rationale for asking ministers to make a contribution towards the cost of cabinet catering?

Ms Cass: I believe it was about them making a contribution. I think the average costs that we've got by financial year going back many years indicate that there has been consistent, moderate and average expenditure for catering over a long period.

Senator KITCHING: How much does Prime Minister Turnbull require his ministers to contribute towards the cost of catering for cabinet meetings?

Ms Cass: This arrangement ceased in September 2015.

Clarification: A more complete explanation is that the arrangement for Ministers' contribution towards the costs of catering ended in August 2013 with the dissolution of Parliament prior to the 2013 Federal election. Following the election, new arrangements were implemented for providing a reduced catering service for meetings under which Prime Minister Abbott made a monthly contribution towards the cost of catering for Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings. These arrangements ceased in September 2015.

7. Page 85-86

Ms Foster: Can I just clarify? The statement was not discussed with him beforehand and he didn't see a draft.

Senator WONG: That's not the evidence that was just given.

Ms Foster: That's correct, Senator. I'm just correcting that evidence, I believe.

Senator WONG: Do you two need to talk?

Ms Bryant: Sorry, I will check. I'm sorry if I've –

Senator WONG: I'm not going to have a go at people who make mistakes, but that's entirely at odds with the evidence that was just given.

Ms Foster: That's correct. I think Ms Bryant's brief was not correct.

Ms Bryant: Yes.

Senator WONG: Your brief wasn't correct?

Ms Foster: The evidence that Ms Bryant has just given you was mistaken.

Senator WONG: Do you want five minutes on this so we can be clear on what the evidence actually is?

Ms Foster: I can be very clear that Dr Parkinson did not receive a draft before it was finalised and it was not discussed with him beforehand.

Senator WONG: Was the fact of the joint statement discussed with him?

Ms Foster: We'll clarify that, Senator

Senator WONG: The content and the fact of. Did anyone at PM&C receive a draft of the joint statement before it went out?

Ms Foster: No. The fact of the statement was not known to him. And, no, nobody in PM&C received a draft.

Clarification: On reviewing his email records, Dr Parkinson noted he had been provided with some text relating to the issue earlier that day, which subsequently formed the basis of the joint statement. Dr Parkinson played no role in the formulation of this text, nor did he provide any comment

8. Page 97

Senator WONG: Can you tell me which department is the lead?

Mr McKinnon: That one is PM&C **DFAT**.

9. Page 101

Senator RICE: So you don't know. After the *Courier Mail* article you haven't investigated as to whether anybody had in fact supplied anybody with a copy of the report?

Mr Walter: Obviously we had some internal conversations. I spoke to the Prime Minister's office, but we essentially settled on the fact that it looked like speculation dressed up as fact. Whether that's true or not—however, I can say that the journalist in question had asked a series of questions of the Prime Minister's office during the week, asking them to confirm or deny certain things. Obviously we're **they were** putting together an article during the week.

Senator RICE: Now that all the hearings have been completed, I'm interested to have a bit of reflection on how all the people that were heard were selected and whether anyone complained that they weren't invited to be heard by the panel?

Mr Walter: As I think we discussed last time at estimates, we went through a process whereby ... I tapped **into** some of my contacts in the human rights community to get their views on people we should meet with.

10. Page 102

Mr Walter: I'm aware of the poll. just. equal provided a letter reflecting the polling to us. I think that was maybe on Thursday last week. We handed the report in on Friday, so the report certainly doesn't refer to that. I think it will probably ... They were looking at that question and looking at evidence that goes to whether they are adequate or do they go too far, rather than how many of our ~~15,269~~ **15,695** submissions—we've settled on that as the number—say that they go too far or don't go the other way

11. Page 102, 103

Senator MOORE: My question is around the SDGs, and I know the people are waiting there. In terms of the process, I know that you're responsible for the domestic side of the process and DFAT is taking the senior leadership in this space and looking at the international role. Can I clarify exactly what stage you are at with the preparation of the report—our voluntary report.

Ms Hatfield Dodds: The NVR report?

Senator MOORE: Yes.

Ms Hatfield Dodds: You would know then, because I think you've done this a couple of times today and over the last couple of days, that Australia is presenting our VNR report in July.

Senator MOORE: Yes.

Ms Hatfield Dodds: In terms of where we're up to, we've provided support to that VNR development process in several ways. I've been co-chairing the IDC with DFAT. That committee met most recently in the last two weeks to pull the final pieces together. PM&C seconded an officer from the Office for Women to assist DFAT with the VNR process. We worked with DFAT to ensure that governments linked at all levels. Our secretary, Dr Martin Parkinson, wrote to his state and territory counterparts, inviting their contribution to the VNR, in August of last year—August 2017. As I understand, every jurisdiction has responded to that invitation. PM&C has provided information at COAG meetings, and at the official meetings that sit behind the COAG meetings, since at least August 2017, and we've been distributing on an iterative basis relevant information to state, territory and local government contacts. We've been trying to not just have the Australian government forward facing and coherent but to work across all Australian governments. I'll talk in a minute about our work with external stakeholders, because the VNR is Australia's VNR, not just the Australian government's or the Australian governments'. While the VNR was being drafted, we worked with other agencies and convened stakeholder forums. Where appropriate, we have supported other agencies in convening and running their own fora and their own consultations, and we've sent representatives to a variety of meetings and fora. So Jason can give you detail if you like, but he has been to at least a couple of external stakeholder forums—ones that ACFID and ACOSS have run, for example—and brought an Australian government perspective there.

Clarification: In the final stages of VNR drafting, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been involved in contacting organisations and communities, including local governments directly, about their case studies and examples to ensure they are happy with their inclusion in the VNR. This has, in some cases, included sharing select relevant passages of the VNR text for fact checking or approval, however has not involved sharing of the full draft VNR with these organisations or with ALGA.

12. Page 113

Senator McALLISTER: Sorry, so there are four staff—

Ms Ganly: ~~Two security staff would come. They come from Scotland Yard~~ **There was one security official that accompanied the four Clarence House staff on the advance visit. The Security staff that accompany are part of the Royalty and Specialist Protection team from Metropolitan Police and they pay their own way.**

13. Page 118

Senator KITCHING: Do ministers always comply and does the Prime Minister always comply?

Ms Ganly: Yes. I have reviewed that in the last few days and all declarations are up to date, **except** for the gifts over that value.

Friday 25 May 2018

1. Page 43

Ms Lewis: The Department of Jobs and Small Business **and PM&C have** ~~has~~ done some modelling using the CDP caseload, to help with the costing process of the cabinet submission.

Should you require further information, please contact Jarrod McAlister on 6271 5639.

Yours sincerely

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First Assistant Secretary
Ministerial Support Division

20 June 2018