

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Commonwealth Submissions to the Special Commissioner Inquiry into the Ruby Princess

Senator: Keneally

Question reference number: 0176

Type of question: Written, 3 August 2020

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 August 2020

Number of pages: 2

Question:

With regard to the Commonwealth Submissions to the Special Commissioner Inquiry into the Ruby Princess:

- a. Which SES officer(s) in the Department were consulted by the Australian Government Solicitor in the preparing the Submission?
- b. Which SES officer(s) in the Department approved the Submission on behalf of the Department?
- c. Was the Prime Minister's office provided a copy of the Submission in draft form?
 - i. If yes:
 1. Why was the Prime Minister's office consulted?
 2. When was the submission provided in draft submission?
 3. What was the Prime Minister's office response to the draft submission? Please include details of any suggestions or requests to change, alter, add to or delete the draft submission? Please also indicate the date each response from the Prime Minister was provided.
 - ii. If no, why was the Prime Minister's office not consulted?
- d. Was the Prime Minister provided a copy of the Submission in draft form?
 - i. If yes:
 1. Why was the Prime Minister consulted?
 2. When was the submission provided in draft submission to the Prime Minister?
 3. What was the Prime Minister's response to the draft submission? Please include details of any suggestions or requests to change, alter, add to or delete the draft submission? Please also indicate the date each response from the Prime Minister was provided.
 - ii. If no, why was the Prime Minister not consulted?

Answer:

The Voluntary Statement was developed by the Australian Government Solicitor in the context of advising the Commonwealth on engagement with the New South Wales Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess.

The draft Voluntary Statement to the New South Wales Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess was provided to the following SES in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C):

- Ms Stephanie Foster, Deputy Secretary, Governance
- Ms Caroline Millar, Deputy Secretary, National Security and International Policy
- Mr John Reid, First Assistant Secretary, Government Division
- Ms Helen Wilson, First Assistant Secretary, Industry, Infrastructure and Environment Division
- Ms Genevieve Quilty, First Assistant Secretary, Social Policy Division
- Mr Lachlan Colquhoun, First Assistant Secretary, National Security Division
- Ms Celeste Moran, Assistant Secretary, Legal Policy Branch
- Mr Michael Burke, Assistant Secretary, Home Affairs Branch
- Ms Tara Oliver, Assistant Secretary, Health Branch
- Ms Linda Rademakers, acting Assistant Secretary, Infrastructure, Population, Agriculture and Regional Development Branch.

PM&C did not approve the Voluntary Statement. Approval was a matter for the three instructing portfolio agencies: the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, the Department of Health and the Department of Home Affairs.

Consistent with the standard practice for the development of whole of Government submissions, responses and statements, a copy of the first Voluntary Statement was provided to the Prime Minister's Office on 5 June 2020.