

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-165

OUTCOME 0: Whole of Portfolio

Topic: MINISTERIAL SUBMISSIONS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

- a) Did the Government, Minister or her office return any documents to the Department once the caretaker conventions began?
- b) Did these documents include Ministerial submissions, briefs or notes?
- c) How many unread, unsigned or undealt with Ministerial submissions, briefs or notes were sent back?
- d) What was the date of the earliest such document that was sent back from the Minister's office and the date of the last?
- e) Did the Minister or her office request prior to the calling of the election that no more submissions, briefs or notes be sent?

Answer:

- a) Yes.
- b) Yes. Ministerial Submissions (known in the department as Minutes to the Minister) were returned to the department.
- c) It is not possible using our reporting functionality to identify Ministerial Submissions as being unread or undealt with. However, during the caretaker period 118 unsigned Ministerial Submissions were returned by Divisional Liaison Officers in the portfolio Ministers' offices. This was done as part of the usual caretaker activity, to return items to the department not appropriately retained in the Ministers offices during this period.

A breakdown of Ministerial Submissions received in the year prior to the caretaker period and the number of unsigned submissions returned by each Minister's office is below.

	<b>Total submissions received 19 July 09 – 19 July 10</b>	<b>submissions returned</b>
Minister for Health and Ageing	1,452	56
Minister for Ageing	278	38
Minister for Sport	196	9
Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health	212	3
Parliamentary Secretary Butler	418	12

- d) With reference to c) above, the earliest unsigned Ministerial Submission was returned to the department on 19 July 2010 and the latest unsigned Ministerial Submission was returned to the department on 8 September 2010.
  
- e) No. However, the Secretary of the department provided written advice to portfolio Ministers and their offices, immediately following the call of the election, on the department's changed operating procedures in accordance with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's "Guidance on Caretaker Conventions".