

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2014

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications

Question No: 346

Program No. Corporate

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Ministerial Leave

Senator Ludwig asked:

Was the Minister on leave at any point during the Christmas break (between the last sitting of parliament in 2013 and the first sitting in 2014)? If so:

1. Please table a schedule of the Ministers leave. Please include:
 - a. The dates the Minister was on leave.
 - b. The dates the Minister was out of the country (if applicable).
2. Who was acting in the Minister's place?
 - a. What date was it decided to have this person act in the Minister's place?
 - b. What was the process for selecting this person?
 - c. Who was involved in making this decision?
3. Were there any matters with which the Department needed to make contact with the Minister during this time? If so:
 - a. Please provide a list of these matters and the date they occurred
 - b. Please provide a copy of any correspondence, emails, notes etc between the minister and the department during this time.
 - c. Were there any times that the Department was aware that it would be unable to communicate with the Minister?
 - d. Were there any times that the Department tried to contact the Minister but were unable?
4. Were there any matters with which the Department needed to make contact with the acting Minister during this time? If so:
 - a. Please provide a list of these matters and the date they occurred
 - b. Please provide a copy of any correspondence, emails, notes etc between the acting minister and the department during this time.
 - c. Were there any times that the Department was aware that it would be unable to communicate with the acting Minister?
 - d. Were there any times that the Department tried to contact the acting Minister but were unable?
5. Did the Department contact the Minister or acting Minister during this time? If so:
 - a. Please provide a list of these matters and the date they occurred
 - b. Please provide a copy of any correspondence, emails, notes etc between the Minister and or acting Minister and the Department during this time.

Answer:

- 1-2. The Special Minister of State will respond to Questions on Notice regarding Ministerial entitlements which are not the responsibility of this Department.
- 3-5. The Department does not record this data in a way that would readily allow for this information to be identified. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of Departmental resources.