

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2016
Communications Portfolio
NBN Co Limited

Question No: 128

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Hansard Ref: Page 139, 18/10/2016

Topic: Article during Caretaker – PMO contact

Senator Dastyari, Sam asked:

Senator DASTYARI: I do not think we will get to the bottom of this until we get the chairman before us, but that is a matter for another day. Minister, when you became aware of this—and, again, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet may have separately done this, and it is their authority to do this—did you notify the Prime Minister's office?

Senator Fifield: I will have to check.

Senator DASTYARI: Your recollection, then, is that you personally did not, but your staff may have spoken, so you have to check.

Senator Fifield: They may well have. I cannot be certain.

Senator DASTYARI: I assume, Mr Morrow and Ms Keisler, that you have no contact with the PMO, the Prime Minister's office. You would go through your department and your minister. Correct?

Ms Keisler: Correct.

Senator DASTYARI: I assume there was no contact, simply from the fact that it was the previous minister. But there was no contact between you and the Prime Minister about this matter?

Mr Morrow: No, there was not.

Senator DASTYARI: Minister Fifield, I just want to be clear about this. Are you saying that from your recollection—you will check this—you yourself did not have contact with the Prime Minister's office, but you are checking whether or not anyone in your office had contact with the Prime Minister's office?

Senator Fifield: I am not saying I did not. I just cannot recall. My office may well have. I would have expected, in the course of events, the Prime Minister's office would have been advised, just as a heads-up, that something was likely to appear. I would expect that would be the case.

Answer:

The office of the Minister for Communications and the Arts advised the office of the Prime Minister that nbn had submitted an opinion piece to a media outlet.