

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

2014 - 2015

Department/Agency: Treasury

Question: AET 56

Topic: Campaign related activity

Reference: Hansard page no. 56 - 26 February 2015

Senator: Dastyari, Sam

Question:

56.

Senator DASTYARI: Is the answer that you got advice from Finance and Finance told you that you did not have to go to campaigns—what is it called, when it is over \$250,000? All government advertising has to go through—there are new rules, but there were still interim rules in place—the Department of Finance. It does not go through a process but you have to meet the campaign advertising guidelines. I am sure Senator Birmingham is fully aware of that. So the question is: if it is above the \$250,000 spend, have you checked whether or not you have to look at meeting the campaign advertising guidelines? That is the question. You may not have to, but did you look to see whether you had to meet them?

Mr Lonsdale: Our understanding—just to follow on from Mr Brake—is that the process that we followed is fully consistent with the guidelines. We talked to the Department of Finance. I will just check with Mr Hickey to see whether there is anything to add.

Mr Hickey: In terms of the timing around those, it was while the interim guidelines were still in place. Around the value, in relation to campaigns or campaign related activity, as I said yesterday, this is not a campaign. The research and the work that have been undertaken would still abide by those guidelines. Having the secretary ultimately sign off is in line with the principles.

Senator Birmingham: I will happily take on notice whether there is anything else to add to that. It strikes me—and I am not familiar with the detail of this—that what the officials have been outlining is more engagement strategy than advertising campaign. But, as I said, if there is anything that provides further clarification of the issues you have raised, Senator Ludwig and Senator Dastyari, we can certainly provide that.

Answer:

56. Treasury has consulted with the Department of Finance and is managing the process in accordance with the guidelines.