

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates 24-28 February 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Outcome/Program:** 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Topic:** Time spent in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

**Senator:** Senator Rachel Siewert

**Question reference number:** 135

**Type of Question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 11 April 2014

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

The Prime Minister has undertaken to spend more time in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and is encouraging his colleagues to make similar commitments. Is the same approach being encouraged within the public service where officials are encouraged to spend their personal time in greater contact with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

**Answer:**

All staff in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) are encouraged to build their cultural understanding and respect and are supported to volunteer, including with Indigenous communities and organisations.

PM&C has offices in 108 locations in regional, remote and very remote Australia where staff live and work daily with Aboriginal and Torres Strait people and communities.

It actively supports the recruitment, development and retainment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and actively harnesses the expertise of its 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

In addition, the Australian Public Service Commission coordinates Australian Government department participation in the *Jawun Indigenous Community Secondment Program*. Highly skilled senior executive level staff are placed in Indigenous organisations to assist with building organisational capacity, accessing mainstream opportunities or implementing health and social reform. Since 2012, over 90 Australian Public Service staff have undertaken placements ranging from six weeks to nine months and have worked and lived as part of Indigenous communities to achieve positive outcomes.