

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 23-27 February 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet
Topic: Expenditure Review Committee

Senator: Mr Sam Dastyari

Question reference number: 215

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 April 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

1. Did the Prime Minister chair every ERC meeting prior to the 2014-15 Budget?
2. When the Prime Minister is present in ERC, who from the PMO accompanies the Prime Minister in the meetings?
3. When the Prime Minister is not available to chair ERC, does the Treasurer chair meetings in his absence?
4. When the Prime Minister and the Treasurer are not available to attend, who chairs the meeting?
5. Have there been any instances where someone other than the Prime Minister, the Treasurer or the Minister for Finance opened a discussion on an issue or an agenda item? Has that ever been someone who wasn't a Minister?
6. Have there been any instances where someone other than a Minister of this government has chaired an ERC meeting?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. It is longstanding practice not to disclose the names of those who may attend Cabinet and Cabinet sub-committee meetings. Refer answer to Question 1 above and PM94 from Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013.
3. The Treasurer is the Deputy Chair of the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) and if the Prime Minister were not available to chair it would be appropriate for the Treasurer to undertake this role.
4. Under standard protocols the most senior member of the committee would chair the meeting if the Chairman and Deputy Chairman were not present.
5. The conduct of a meeting of Cabinet or its committees is a matter for the Chair. Any Minister may open discussion on an issue or agenda item. When officials are present, for example at ERC meetings, the Chair may invite them to provide advice.
6. No.