

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: Media

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Question reference number: 22

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

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Question:

Senator WONG: Are members of staff permitted to background media negatively or positively—well, negativity—about a departmental secretary?

Senator Abetz: I would say they can positively but not—

Senator WONG: I am asking.

Senator Abetz: I will take that on notice.

Senator WONG: You do not know? Is your chief of staff allowed to background against or for your departmental secretary?

Senator Abetz: My chief of staff is a very good person, but we are not here talking about my portfolio. We are talking about Prime Minister and Cabinet. I will take that on notice for the Prime Minister's office.

Senator WONG: But I am asking what the rules are. I am asking whether or not the rules are that ministerial staff can or cannot talk to the media about APS officials.

Senator Abetz: I will take that on notice as to what the official—

Answer:

Ministerial staff are required to comply with the Statement of Standards for Ministerial Staff.