

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: Question Time Briefs

Senator: Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig

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Question:

Senator LUDWIG: The question time brief for Thursday 12 February went to the disclosure of the contents of the briefing that the Prime Minister received that morning from the director-general of ASIO and the AFP. Was that an iterative process where the PMO requested that information be prepared by PM&C? Or was there a standing brief that PM&C then provided as a consequence of that brief?

Senator Abetz: Before we go there, we do not comment on the information that may or may not be provided. I do not know if you assert you have got a particular document in front of you or you have special knowledge of what the briefing may or may not have contained, but the information that is provided is clearly in the form of advice and we do not comment on it.

Senator LUDWIG: I am not looking for what was in the advice. Let us be clear. I know that (a) you would not answer that and (b) I should not ask it in any event.

Senator Abetz: All right, I am sorry; I may have misinterpreted your question. Can you ask it again?

Senator LUDWIG: Was there a brief provided for the Prime Minister ahead of question time on Thursday, 12 February which went to the answer that he then gave—if I can put it that way?

Senator Abetz: Whether or not a brief was provided on a certain topic you might be able to ask, but whether that then informed his answer in the parliament is not something that you can canvass.

Senator LUDWIG: Let us deal with the first issue then. Was there a brief that went to the issue?

Ms Cross: We would take that on notice. We would not normally reveal what we included in the briefing pack, but we will take that on notice for you.

Senator LUDWIG: In respect of that, which is a slightly ancillary matter, did the PMO ask for a brief to be prepared in relation to that issue?

Ms Cross: Again, we would not normally reveal the nature of—

Senator LUDWIG: I am not looking for the content, just whether or not it was a question that was asked of the pack.

Ms Cross: Again, I do not think we would normally reveal that, but I am happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

No. As the Chief Commissioner of the AFP outlined to Senate Estimates on 24 February 2015, the Prime Minister had received a briefing on 12 February 2015 and the AFP subsequently cleared the content of the statement.