

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
— Supplementary Additional Budget Estimates Hearing— 8 February
2016**

Answers to Questions on Notice

President of the Senate

Topic: **Official overseas travel**

Hansard Reference **p 12; 8 February 2016**

Senator WONG: Of a proposed travel arrangement. Okay. I ask you to provide a copy of that letter. Were there any further letters?

The President: The quantity I would have to check, but that was in the early stages. Things improved in the second half of that financial year—the second half of the 2014-15 financial year—and so far this financial year I have not needed to draw at all on the Department of Finance. I have an understanding now from the Prime Minister's—

Senator WONG: I will come to that. I am asking for the period only under the previous Prime Minister. I ask for all correspondence between the Prime Minister and/or the Prime Minister's office and you and your office in relation to pending travel. Thank you.

The President: I am sympathetic to that request, but let me go away and think about that.

Senator WONG: Of course.

CHAIR: May I ask a question in this respect? What is the time sensitivity of some of these trips? I understand exactly why you want to go down a different path, but how quickly does concurrence need to be granted? Where concurrence has been denied, how close to the trip do these things come into play?

The President: On two occasions. One involved President Hogg, which I think was on the eve of travel. The other, in relation to me, was maybe two or three days before proposed travel, so the trip was cancelled because we could not confirm anything and concurrence was granted too late.

CHAIR: Clearly arrangements are not made in the last 24 hours in international delegations and things of that nature, so a lot of work has been invested into it by the Department of the Senate and other departments and, on the eve of travel—in the case of Senator Hogg—or a couple of days before, concurrence has been denied.

Senator WONG: Could you, on notice—if it is possible—provide information regarding telephone conversations, verbal conversations, between the offices in relation to concurrence for that period. You or your chief of staff may have some notes.

Answer

The President has written directly to Senator Wong regarding this request.