

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – FEBRUARY 2016

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman

Outcome/Program:

Outcome 1. Fair and accountable administrative action by Australian Government entities and prescribed private sector organisations, by investigating complaints, reviewing administrative action and statutory compliance inspections and reporting.

Topic: Investigation 2015-703947

Senator: Senator Xenophon

Question reference number: 116

Type of question: Written

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 1 April 2016

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator XENOPHON:

Can the Ombudsman provide information on the delays that have occurred in investigation 2015-703947 as a result of the Child Support Agency not responding to the Ombudsman in a timely fashion?

Answer:

The *Ombudsman Act 1976* provides for Commonwealth Ombudsman investigations to be conducted in private and as the Commonwealth Ombudsman sees fit.

In 2015-703947, a request for information was first made to the agency on 10 September 2015. The agency sought a number of extensions in which to respond. The agency's requests were acceded to by the Commonwealth Ombudsman on the basis that by granting extensions, it was anticipated that this would enable the agency to provide a more comprehensive response.

The agency provided a response on 20 January 2016 after the Commonwealth Ombudsman foreshadowed the exercise of Section 9. Having considered the agency response, the Commonwealth Ombudsman has sought further information from the agency. Updates have been provided to the complainant.