

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2014-15

Finance Portfolio

Department/Agency: AEC

Outcome/Program: General

Topic: Funding and Disclosure - Operations Spicer and Credo

Senator: Faulkner

Question reference number: F302

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 11 July 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) Is the AEC monitoring the evidence being presented at the NSW ICAC in Operation Spicer and Operation Credo? If so, how is the AEC monitoring the evidence?
- b) Following the evidence given to the NSW ICAC that property developers' donations received by NSW Liberal Party fundraising officers over 2010-2011 were passed on to the Free Enterprise Foundation with the intention they would be returned to the NSW Liberal Party, has the AEC checked Returns by donors, the NSW Liberal Party and the Free Enterprise Foundation to ensure compliance with subsection 305B(2) and the other provisions of the Commonwealth Electoral Act (the Act)?
- c) Is the AEC taking any action to ensure allegations raised at the NSW ICAC in Operation Spicer and Operation Credo relating to the hiding or disguising of political donations are investigated, and that the Act is complied with?

Answer:

- a) Yes. The AEC is monitoring the transcripts available on the ICAC website and any media reports which report on developments and outcomes from the ICAC investigations and hearings.
- b) The AEC conducted compliance reviews, which included an examination of the financial records of the Free Enterprise Foundation, on two of the last four annual disclosure returns and has not identified any discrepancies in their disclosures as required by the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (CEA). More generally, the AEC also undertakes analysis of all donations over the disclosure threshold after returns for each annual cycle are received to ensure that the reporting obligations of both the donor and the party or an associated entity are met.
- c) The AEC is monitoring ICAC with the intention of ensuring that all donors, parties and associated entities that have an obligation under the CEA have met those obligations. The ICAC hearings have not yet concluded and the AEC will continue to monitor the ICAC hearings.