

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 26 May-6 June 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Appointment of Mr William Johnston to Senator Scullion's staff

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Question reference number: 116

Type of Question: FPA, Tuesday 27 May 2014, page 119 & 120

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 June 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator WONG: I go to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs. Could you confirm that the Prime Minister personally approved the appointment to Mr William Johnstone to the staff of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs in accordance with the procedure that you previously have given evidence about?

Senator Abetz: The evidence I have previously given is not as you have tried to summarise it, but the appointment was, as I understand it, processed in the normal manner.

Senator WONG: So the Prime Minister approved the appointment?

Senator Abetz: As I have indicated previously, he delegates that out to staff. He does not go through every job application personally. The staff committee does go through and vet various ministerial staff appointments.

Senator WONG: On what date did the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's chief of staff approve the appointment?

Senator Abetz: I am not sure I have that with me.

Senator WONG: I understand if you have to take that on notice.

Senator Abetz: Alright. It will save me looking for it now when I do not think I have it.

Senator WONG: Can you also take on notice whether or not the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's office at the time the appointment was approved knew that Mr Johnstone had a direct interest in a company operating in the area of the Minister's portfolio?

Senator Abetz: Yes, I will take that on notice.

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Answer:

14 November 2013.

No.