

**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:** Ministerial order of precedence - purpose

**Senator:** Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins

**Question reference number:** 96

**Type of Question:** FPA, Tuesday 27 May 2014, page 106-107

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

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: And whether that ends up being an interim arrangement or not—how that stands at the time you answer the question. Another area is the order of precedence. Can you describe for me the purpose of the order of precedence that is approved by the Prime Minister and lists the seniority of the 42 members of the ministry—sorry, I should say 30—and the parliamentary secretaries?

Senator Abetz: That is a very good question. I understand it has been long-established practice for the purposes of seniority for seating in the chamber and, I dare say, for representative roles. But I do not think there is any great magic to it.

Senator FAULKNER: The Prime Minister chooses the order of precedence.

.....

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: I was just wondering if the department themselves were in a position to outline their understanding of the order of precedence.

Ms Kelly: It is as the minister has explained.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: You have no understanding further than what Senator Abetz has just indicated, other than that you will take it on notice?

Ms Kelly: No.

Senator Abetz: I have taken it on notice and we will see if there is anything further to add.

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Budget Estimates 26 May-6 June 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Answer:**

Consistent with the longstanding practice of successive governments, the ministerial order of precedence is a matter for the Prime Minister. It is the Department's understanding that the document exists for the purpose of protocol matters such as seating arrangements at official functions and in the chamber.