

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates Hearing 25-29 May 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet
Topic: Media statement

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Question reference number: 215

Type of question: 26 May 2015 p. 80 and 81

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 18 June 2015

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator WONG: Can I have a copy of that statement that was provided to the media?

Ms Kelly: We have a copy but it is part of another email, so we might need to take some time in order to identify—

Senator WONG: If you could come back with that, I would appreciate that. At whose request was that statement drafted?

Ms Kelly: It was in response to a media query.

Senator WONG: At whose request was the statement drafted?

Ms Kelly: We might have to take that on notice. We get numerous media requests everyday and we assist in providing material in response to media queries. We can take that on notice and get the details in relation to this particular request.

Senator WONG: Was the statement drafted at the request of the Prime Minister's office?

Ms Spence: The request would have come from the journalist to the PM&C media team not via the office, is my recollection but I will have to check to make sure that is correct.

...

Senator WONG: Ms Kelly, did I understand you took on notice whether or not there was any discussion with PMO about the release of that statement?

Ms Kelly: Yes.

Senator WONG: You are not aware?

Ms Kelly: No, I am not aware. But I did see it. I do not know what happened to it before I saw it.

Senator WONG: Ms Spence, was there a discussion between you and the Prime Minister's office?

Ms Spence: Not between me—the office may have been advised of the response that we were providing. But I would have to take that on notice.

Senator WONG: Could I still request a copy of the call PM&C statement as provided to The Daily Telegraph please?

Ms Kelly: Yes.

Answer:

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet provided the following response to an enquiry from Fairfax media on this matter:

“Long standing and accepted practice has been for spouses/partners to form part of an official greeting line at the airport on arrival into a country when the Prime Minister is accompanied by his/her spouse.

These arrangements are consistent with how incoming Heads of State and Heads of Government are greeted in Australia.”

The Department did not receive an enquiry or provide a response to *The Daily Telegraph*.