

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: Equipment use

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Question reference number: 216

Type of question: 26 May 2015 p. 89

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 July 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator WONG: Ms Kelly, what I am asking you about is your previous answer. You said that you would raise my concerns with the Prime Minister's Office. Tell me, is it not a concern of Prime Minister and Cabinet whether or not taxpayer-funded equipment is used for party political purposes?

Senator Cormann: I am going to answer that question.

Senator WONG: How can you answer that question?

CHAIR: The minister is entitled to take the question.

Senator Cormann: I have already indicated to you that I will take on notice the question inasmuch as it relates to the Prime Minister's Office and, to the extent that we can assist you with relevant additional information, we will provide it in the appropriate time.

Senator WONG: I am asking about the department's policy. Does the department have written or unwritten policy or guidelines in relation to the use of taxpayer-funded equipment for party political purposes?

Ms Kelly: I will have to take on notice if there is anything that relates to this particular situation or if there is more general material, but I will take that on notice and we will return to you with that.

Senator WONG: Ms Kelly, surely you are not suggesting that there is any doubt that the supposedly apolitical public service would countenance a situation where taxpayer funding for such equipment was used for party political purposes?

Senator Cormann: I completely reject the imputation in that question. The officer has already taken that question on notice, and adding some political flavour to the question does not make it a different question. The question was taken on notice.

Answer:

Guidance for the appropriate use of Commonwealth resources is provided through the Statement of Ministerial Standards (s1.3 (i) and s4.1) and the Statement of Standards for Ministerial Staff (Paragraph 14).