

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017-18

Finance Portfolio
24-25 May 2017

Department/Agency: Finance
Outcome/Program: 3/3.1
Topic: Printing by the Member of Bowman

Senator: Watt
Question reference number: F91
Type of question: Hansard Proof, 25 May 2017, F&PA Committee, page 103-104
Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 7 July 2017

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator WATT: What are the rules exactly around federal MPs using their printing and communications entitlement to support the campaigns of state MPs or candidates?

...

Senator WATT: I would just like to table a copy of a survey that has been distributed, I presume within his electorate, by the member for Bowman, Mr Andrew Laming. When you see that document you will see that Mr Laming's mail-out uses the Commonwealth crest in the letterhead, and included in the mail-out is a questionnaire entitled, 'Local politics: who do you support?' Among other things Mr Laming uses what I presume is a taxpayer-funded document to ask his constituents if they like their local mayor, councillor, state member and federal member, and it also asks, 'Which way do you currently lean: LNP, One Nation, Labor/Greens?'—because I presume in Mr Laming's mind that is one party. Does that appear, on its face, to comply with the regulations about the use of the printing and communications entitlement?

Ms Baker: On the face of it that appears to be within the printing and communications entitlement.

...

Ms Baker: Sorry—I am not aware that Mr Laming used his printing and communications entitlement to produce this document. It may not be Commonwealth funded.

Senator WATT: I have not actually been through this process yet, being a new senator, but my understanding is you normally would seek Finance approval before—

Ms Baker: You can seek preapproval, or you can use your print and communications entitlement, and it is checked post printing. So you can get preapproval prior to something being printed.

Senator WATT: Do you know whether preapproval was sought for this particular piece?

Ms Baker: I am sorry; I do not.

Senator WATT: Could you take that on notice, please.

Ms Baker: Yes.

Answer:

No. Preapproval was not sought for this particular piece.