

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 18-22 November 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: Governance Group

Topic: Security Clearances

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Question reference number: 79

Type of Question: Written

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Question:

Are staff in the offices of portfolio Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries required to obtain and maintain a minimum Negative Vetting Level 2 (formerly TOP SECRET) security clearance?

How many staff, per office, are yet to obtain these clearances?

What steps have been taken to ensure staff without an appropriate security clearance do not have access to sensitive material?

Have any waivers been granted to permit staff without clearances to access sensitive material? If so, how many, per office?

Answer:

Parts 1 and 2 of this question have been referred to Department of Finance for response.

Clearance requirements for all MOPS personnel are managed by the Department of Finance, in consultation with the Prime Minister's Office.

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) Security ensures that appropriate training and security measures are in place to limit access to sensitive information whilst a candidate is undergoing a clearance process through Finance.

PM&C have granted baseline waivers for 15 staff in the offices of the Prime Minister, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, the Minister assisting the Prime Minister for Women, and the Parliamentary Secretaries – for the purposes of accessing PM&C's protected network.