

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: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Secondment of employees

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Question reference number: 99

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 January 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

How many employees of the department have been seconded to the offices of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries since 18 September 2013? Please provide details per office.

Do any guidelines govern the secondment of departmental employees to ministerial offices? If so, can a copy be provided?

Answer:

There were three staff from the Department working in the Prime Minister's office and one working in the Cabinet Office. There was one other PM&C person in Senator Cash's office on a 12-week relief arrangement.

The Ministers of State Handbook issued by the Department of Finance

(see http://www.maps.finance.gov.au/entitlements_handbooks/index.html) states:

When a personal employee is absent on approved leave for a period of 12 weeks or more, a person may be temporarily employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* to fill the vacancy. When a personal employee is on leave for a shorter period, the Minister's portfolio department is responsible for providing any relief required.

Consistent with longstanding practice this 12 week relief arrangement has also been relied on when offices are being established and short-term staff are needed to undertake roles until long term staff are engaged by the Minister under the MOP(S) Act.