

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 20-24 October 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Correspondence received regarding wearing of the burqa

Senator: Senator Claire Moore

Question reference number: 2

Type of question: FPA Monday 20 October 2014, page 50

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 5 December 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator MOORE: It was correspondence from a group of women's groups. It was sent on 9 October and its topic was the concern around the policy decisions around the wearing of the burqa generally and specifically in this building.

Senator Cash: The department will have a look to see if they have received it.

Ms McDevitt: I expected it would be on our system, but I cannot recall that one specifically.

Senator MOORE: Have you received any kind of call or contact from anyone in the community? Sometimes people who have a concern about issues around women just contact the department. Have you received any concerns or questions on this issue?

Ms Wallace: Not that is standing out, no,

Senator MOORE: Can you check that as well to see whether there has been anything like that? That would be useful.

Ms Wallace: Certainly.

Answer:

The Office for Women received an email on 22 October 2014 from the National Foundation for Australian Women, which attached a joint media statement, dated 9 October 2014, issued by a number of women's organisations concerned about the interim decisions made by the Presiding Officers relating to the wearing of the burqa in Australian Parliament House. The Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women responded to the email on 27 October 2014.