

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: Ebola virus – briefing to PM

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

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Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator WONG: Can someone tell me on how many occasions a written brief in relation to Ebola has been provided to the Prime Minister?

Ms Cross: I would need to check the number of briefs because we have briefed the Prime Minister quite regularly since the outbreak began.

Senator WONG: Dr McCarthy, there is no brief from you, but you are consulted in relation to at least some of the briefs provided? Is that—

Dr McCarthy: That is correct. I think all the briefs have been provided by the domestic policy area, and we have been consulted—that is right.

Senator WONG: On all of them or some of them?

Dr McCarthy: To be absolutely certain I would need to take it on notice.

Senator WONG: Sure. Take it on notice; that is fine. Has the Chief Medical Officer been involved in the preparation of any briefs to the Prime Minister?

Dr McCarthy: We have certainly drawn on advice from the Chief Medical Officer. Ms Cross?

Ms Cross: Yes, I can confirm that we have drawn on his advice.

Senator WONG: You have drawn on his advice. There is not an independent brief prepared by the CMO for the Prime Minister's consideration?

Ms Cross: Again I would have to check. We may have attached briefs from him, so there may have been advice direct, but I will check that for you.

Senator WONG: If you could—and just give me the dates, if that is possible.

Answer:

As at 20 October 2014, the Prime Minister had received 11 written briefs from the Department regarding Ebola.

The Chief Medical Officer has been involved in the preparation of briefs to the Prime Minister on Ebola.

The Domestic Policy Group consulted the National Security and International Policy Group on relevant briefs to the Prime Minister regarding Ebola.