

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2015-16

Finance Portfolio
20 October 2015

Department/Agency: Australian Electoral Commission

Outcome/Program: General

Topic: Foundation 51 – payments made to Mr James McGrath

Senator: Wong

Question reference number: F55

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 4 December 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

1. Did the Australian Electoral Commissioner receive information in December 2014 that in 2012 an entity known as Foundation 51 had paid “outgoings” to the Country Liberal Party’s 2012 campaign director, Mr James McGrath.
2. Did the Australian Electoral Commissioner contact Mr McGrath to ascertain whether Foundation 51 made payments to him directly, via the Country Liberal Party, or via another source, in the course of determining whether the entity should lodge an annual disclosure return as an associated entity of the Country Liberal Party.

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. No, the Australian Electoral Commission did not contact Mr McGrath. The alleged payment for “outgoings” occurred in August 2012. Foundation 51 lodged its disclosure return for 2012–13 on 28 November 2014. This return was required to incorporate details of total payments made during the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013. The Australian Electoral Commission conducted an investigation of the annual financial disclosure return for the 2012–13 financial year. As a result of the investigation, two amendments were lodged by Foundation 51 to accurately reflect receipts above the threshold. The Australian Electoral Commission considers that the 2012–13 annual disclosure return, as amended, complies with the disclosure requirements of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.