

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 19-23 October 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet
Topic: Documents returned from the former Prime Minister's office

Senator: Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig

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

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Question:

Senator LUDWIG: Would they return the documents, or would they scan the documents and then subsequently destroy them?

Ms Spence: They would not have needed to scan them, because they would have been in our parliamentary workplace system. I would have to take on notice whether they physically brought the documents back or returned them to the department for action through the system.

Senator LUDWIG: And that would depend on whether they were signed prior to the resignation, or, as the case may be, left unsigned post the resignation? Would they have made a delineation along those lines? I am happy for you to take that on notice.

Ms Spence: I would have to take that on notice.

Senator LUDWIG: And that policy lies where?

Ms Spence: I am not sure if it is set out. I will check if it is in our ministerial correspondence handling material. It is standard practice. I do not know if it is written down anywhere.

Answer:

All outstanding ministerial work, previously allocated to the office of the former Prime Minister (the former office), was returned to the Department un-actioned. The former office, through the Departmental Liaison Officers, either returned hard copy ministerial items or destroyed them as appropriate and in accordance with security protocols.

The process for handling ministerial items as a result in a change of Prime Minister is not set out in the department's ministerial handling guidelines.