

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2016-17**

Finance Portfolio  
18 October 2016

**Department/Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Outcome/Program:** General

**Topic:** AEC's contact with Mr Lincoln Folo regarding the 'Fadden Forum'

**Senator:** McAllister

**Question reference number:** F50

**Type of question:** Hansard Proof, F&PA Committee, Pages 120 and 128, 18 October 2016

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday, 2 December 2016

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

**Senator McALLISTER:** I refer you to another article from around the same time, in May. I will table it for the same reason. It is headlined 'Sacked minister Stuart Robert in cash scandal'. There is a line in that report which says that the funnelling of at least \$70,000 out of the Fadden Forum has already led to the demotion of LNP state director Lincoln Folo. Did you ever speak to Mr Folo about the Fadden Forum? Could you tell us about that?

...

**Mr Rogers:** Senator, I can tell you while we are waiting for that article that I have never spoken to the individual you just mentioned. Whether one of my staff has or not, I will have to take on notice.

**Mr Pirani:** Our normal practice would be to deal with the party agent. So whoever was the relevant party agent at that time for the LNP would have been the person who the AEC would have spoken to.

**Mr Rogers:** But we will have to confirm that, and we will have to take that on notice.

...

**Mr Rogers:** I am not sure that I am going to be able to expand on it this evening but I am happy to take on notice who we may or may not have spoken to. It would be useful to get the article at some point in any case.

...

**Senator McALLISTER:** All right. There are a range of issues that are in here. I will leave it with you. I would appreciate it if you would examine the allegations in the newspaper articles that I have provided and come back to us on notice as to whether there are any issues there that concern you at the AEC. Thank you.

**Mr Rogers:** Certainly.

**Answer:**

1. Contact with Mr Folo

The AEC has had no contact with Mr Folo regarding the Fadden Forum.

2. Issue raised in media articles. Donations from Ms Simone Holzapfel

The following articles were raised at the hearing.

- *The Australian* on 4 May 2016 titled “Abbott advisor in funding row”.
- *Sydney Morning Herald* on 28 September 2016 titled “MP’s speech partly written by lobbyist for property developer”.
- *Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 September 2016 titled “Developer donated to LNP after MP’s Speech”.
- *The Australian* on 30 September 2016 titled “Lobbyist gave money to Robert as firm collapsed”
- *Gold Coast Bulletin* on 30 September 2016 titled “Lee wants MP apology”

There are no significant outstanding issues arising from these articles for the AEC, however two items are presented for the Committee’s information.

1. In relation to the *Sydney Morning Herald* article of 28 September 2016: The AEC is making enquiries about an alleged donation of \$12,500 from Mr Soheil Abedian to the Liberal National Party in the 2013-14 period. If a disclosure return is received by the AEC, it will be published in the usual way.
2. In relation to *The Australian* article of 30 September 2016: The provisions of s306B of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (repayment of gift where corporations are wound up within a year of the gift) do not apply because the gift was made in 2013-14.