

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Outcome/Program:** Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Topic:** The former Prime Minister Abbott- Support letter for Mrs Clark's candidacy for the UN S-G

**Senator:** Wong, Penny

**Question reference number:** 36

**Type of question:** FPA Monday 17 October 2016, Page 70

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

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

Senator WONG: You might have to take this on notice too. The former Prime Minister wrote to Prime Minister Key in late 2014 saying that Australia would support Mrs Clark's candidacy for the UN S-G. Did PM&C draft that letter or was that drafted in the office?

Mr McKinnon: I would like to take that on notice as well.

Senator WONG: Could you also advise if the department is aware as to whether or not Mr Abbott consulted Ms Bishop before writing the letter?

Mr McKinnon: I will take that on notice.

Senator WONG: I assume you can also take on notice whether or not this letter was in response to a request from the New Zealand Prime Minister?

Mr McKinnon: Yes, I will take that on notice too. I can already confirm that the second letter you referred to was not received by PM&C.

**Answer:**

a) The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) does not normally comment on the content of its advice.

b) PM&C is not aware if the former Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, consulted the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, before writing the letter.

c) PM&C is not aware of any previous communications between the former Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, and Prime Minister Key on this matter.