

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Program: 1.9

Question No. SBE15/075

Senator Bilyk asked the following question at the hearing on 20 October 2015:

1. Please explain what role if any the Director of Media and Communications played in responding to the scandal which engulfed the Royal Commission following revelations Dyson Heydon had agreed to appear as the star attraction at a Liberal Party fundraiser.
2. On how many occasions has Dyson Heydon met with representatives of the Liberal Party?
3. Can a copy of any diary entries in relation to these meetings please be provided?
4. How many Liberal Party fundraisers or other events has Mr Heydon attended?
5. Could a copy of any invitations for those events please be provided?
6. Can a copy of any correspondence between Mr Heydon and Liberal Party representatives please be provided?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

1. The Director, Media & Communications, was involved in responding to media enquiries that arose in relation to the Garfield Barwick dinner. This continued throughout the period until the Commissioner delivered his ruling on the apprehended bias applications.
2. During the period since the Letters Patent were issued on 13 March 2014 the Commissioner did not meet with any representatives of the Liberal Party. The Commissioner spoke to Mr Greg Burton SC when he delivered the Acton Lecture on 10 April, which Mr Burton attended. Mr Burton was, at the time, the Chairman of the Legal Professional Branch of the NSW Division of the Liberal Party.
3. There are none.
4. None.
5. Does not arise, by virtue of the answer to 4.
6. The substance of the correspondence with Mr Burton appears in the Commissioner's reasons for non-disqualification delivered on 31 August 2015. A copy of the correspondence itself is available on the Commission's 17 August hearing page at <http://www.tradeunionroyalcommission.gov.au/Hearings/Pages/Hearings/2015/17-August-2015-ACTU-Application.aspx>

It would be an unreasonable diversion of the Commission's resources to manually re-print and assemble all of the publicly available Burton documents.