

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2008-09 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome People, Parliamentary and Communications Group

DEEWR Question No. EW575_09

Senator Fisher asked on 2 June 2008, EEWL Hansard page 67.

Question

Charter letters

Has the minister in this portfolio received her charter letter yet? What date that she received her charter letter? Is it the intention to make her charter letter public?

Answer

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has advised that over January and early February 2008, the Prime Minister conducted a series of meetings with each senior portfolio Minister and the Cabinet Secretary. These meetings were arranged as an opportunity, early in the life of the new Government, to discuss the Prime Minister's and Ministers' views on each portfolio's key objectives, priorities and performance measurement and reporting arrangements.

At the conclusion of these meetings, draft charter letters summarising each portfolio's priorities were prepared by the relevant Department and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and provided to the Prime Minister's Office. Following the receipt of all the draft charter letters, the Prime Minister decided that their distribution was not necessary at that point in the Government's first term. As a result, the charter letters were not finalised or issued.

The manner in which successive governments have managed their priorities, including whether charter letters or other approaches are used, has changed from time to time. It is a longstanding convention before this Committee that the policy on how priorities are set by a Government, and the nature or content of those priorities, is not disclosed, to maintain Cabinet confidentiality.

The Prime Minister continues to discuss the Government's objectives including delivery of its election commitments with each Minister.