

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 13-16 Feb 2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.4 Support Services for Government Operations

Topic: Australia Day Function - PMO staff present

Senator: Senator Brandis

Question reference number: 2

Type of Question: FPA, P51, 13 February

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 30 March 2012

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator BRANDIS: I am told that it is not disputed and that the Prime Minister's office was given the opportunity to dispute it and did not do so. Be that as it may, would you please - and I understand you will have to take this question on notice - come back to the committee and tell us whether it is the case, as reported by Mr Shanahan and Mr Franklin, that Mr Hodges did have a face-to-face conversation with the protesters outside The Lobby restaurant well before the security scare, whether that conversation took place in the presence of another of Ms Gillard's staff, whether that staff member was in fact Sam Casey, and what Mr Hodges said to the protesters in the course of that conversation. I understand that Mr Hodges -

Senator Chris Evans: I just want to be clear what you are asking me. Are you saying Mr Hodges had the conversation or Mr Casey did?

Senator BRANDIS: That is what is asserted.

Senator Chris Evans: So you are asserting Mr Hodges had the conversation and that Mr Casey was in his presence or are you asserting Mr Casey had the conversation?

Senator BRANDIS: Mr Hodges, in the company of another Gillard staffer, talked to protesters. That is what the journalists have written, which I am told has not been disputed by the Prime Minister's office. What I have asked are four specific questions: whether such a conversation took place, whether it took place in the presence of another Gillard staff member, whether that Gillard staff member was Sam Casey, and what was said.

Senator Chris Evans: I have no knowledge of that, so I will see what the Prime Minister's office has to say in response.

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Senator BRANDIS: Thank you very much. You can take that on notice.

Answer:

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is advised that there is no further information on this matter beyond the detailed statements made by the Prime Minister in relation to the events on Australia Day.